

DOLLSHOUSE

WORLD'S BEST-SELLING MINIATURES MAGAZINE

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contents

small details

• Issue 337

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Jo has created her latest house in a permanent state of festive readiness

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Take an old tin can and an assortment of festive fabrics for this tree skirt

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Gorgeous miniatures that have been created with the festive season in mind



"where little things matter"



ollshouseworld

dollshouseworldmagazine



welcome

It was Kris Kringle in the film Miracle on 34th Street who put it best: "Christmas isn't just a day, it's a frame of mind." That's a sentiment

that will resonate with miniaturists around the world as we celebrate the festive season in our houses, roomboxes and shops.

Whether you opt for keeping your rooms full of Christmas cheer all year round or just add a couple of twelfth scale cards as a token gesture, there's plenty to entertain and inspire you in this fabulous, fun-filled issue.

It's a 100-page spectacular package with some amazing stories and features. You can enjoy a Santa's workshop which reflects the idea that this time of year is all about family and friends. And you can sit back and admire some beautiful toy shops that are full of incredible detail.

And I love the heart-warming story of how Debbie Young stumbled into this hobby during a crossroads in her life. It happened when she called a woman who had just returned from her husband's funeral. Debbie remembers: "I spent the next week teaching her everything I knew about photography, and she taught me everything she knew about life."

We've also come up with some wonderful 3D trees for you to cut out and put together, as well as a lovely little gingerbread house. You can even make the gingerbread men to go in them.

Don't worry if you haven't got time to do everything right away. As many miniacs will testify, you can keep a festive 'frame of mind' all year round. From all of us at DHW, have a wonderful Christmas and may all your gifts come in small packages.

Kichard.

email: richard@ashdown.co.uk

Sue just rescued a Sid Cooke house from her late mum's attic, with an idea for a lockdown renovation. Among the jumble of furniture inside was this nativity scene, stuck with Blu Tack to an old wooden coaster.



Meet the Makers

We chat with talented makers Lisa Meyer and Stephanie Watt

Mini Makes

Knit a cute little dress to get a lucky doll ready for the party

Shop Around

Jill's Jingles shop was built a while ago but has lost none of its charm

Meet the Maker

A whole new world opened up when Maria's aunt won a doll's house

64 Smaller Scales

Debbie Young talks about her amazing life in miniatures

Mini Makes

Make your own cookie cutters to create little gingerbread men

Mini Makes

Make this whimsical clock with a festive family feel

Thorne Rooms

How historic rooms got new daring decorations that have proved so popular



Shop Around

Joan's toy shop dream is made real at last with this treasured store

Meet the Maker

Like many makers Elizabeth finds the midnight hours quite magical

Mini Makes

Decorate a miniature basket and then fill it with Christmas goodies

Mini Makes

Turn a doll into a jolly Santa with this red suit that's easy to make

Cutouts

We've got some wonderful trees for you to make plus other festive ideas

Small Talk

We chat with Jenny Kelm about her life in miniatures

Quote of the month: —

Sometimes we get so caught up trying to accomplish something big, that we forget the little things that give Christmas its magic

HOUSE HUNT

Find the little house hidden inside. Last issue it appeared on page 41.

Caring for the environment: Here at Dolls House World we're as concerned about the environment as you are. We're doing everything we can to ensure the magazine is produced in the most eco friendly way possible.

Our magazine is printed using vegetable-based inks on an environmentally responsible paper, which is certified by the prestigious FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council), the not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of responsible forest management worldwide. Our paper also carries the internationally recognised EU Eco-label.

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with both FSC® and ISO 14001 certification. They are backed by a series of environmental credentials that allow them to work under the "Green Printing Label". Our printers are also a sponsor of the Woodland Trust – the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.



House gives Christmas cheer all year round

Jo had learned that decorating a doll's house just for Christmas could be stressful, so she created her next one in a permanent state of festive readiness

BY JO DIXON

spent years decorating my first doll's house for Christmas and it became as daunting as decorating my life-sized home.

So, when this previously owned doll's house was presented to me I felt it would make the perfect Christmas house to be enjoyed throughout the year.

My daughter encountered this adorable little Real Good Toys Colonial and offered it to me, furnishings included. I was thrilled, even though I was restoring an exceptionally large Foxhall Manor at the time. With Christmas only six months away I estimated that I could refurbish the Colonial in a couple of months, in time to unveil it for Christmas, and return to the Foxhall later. I dived in to stripping, sanding, priming, electrifying, and modifying.

The house had to have a toy shop and workshop, along with living quarters on the upper floors. Deciding the bedroom and bath would exist on the top level and being a stickler for realism in my doll's houses, I had to cut a hole in the top floor for stair access to the top level. Performing creative contortionism, I managed to get my jigsaw into that angled, tight space at the front of the top floor and ceiling

(saw did not fit between second floor and ceiling).

I then cut a new full-wall divider between the bedroom and bath, which included a privacy door. I also bought new stairs for all the floors as the original stairs were painted and I wanted natural trims and flooring in this house. All the floors were re-covered using real wood tongue depressors, curved ends cut away and randomly cut for a realistic natural appearance. All new wallpaper was applied using scrapbook paper which I would not attempt to use again due to the papers not having repeats like standard doll's house wallpapers.

In keeping with the festive scheme I added poinsettias to the window boxes and reattached them (they had been removed from house when I received it but were included with the box of furnishings). Nutcracker ornaments adorn the front entrance.

I love finding items that are not originally intended as doll's house items but are to scale. That's why I am a huge follower of Hallmark Christmas ornaments. The little ladies in Santa's Toy Shop are all Madame Alexander Hallmark Keepsake ornaments. I have always been an admirer of Madame



















I was ecstatic to discover that their height was perfect as twelfth scale children.



會OPEN HOUSE







會OPEN HOUSE





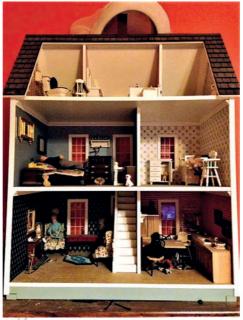


Alexander dolls. I was ecstatic to discover that their height was perfect as twelfth scale children. All the doll's houses in the toy shop and workshop are part of Hallmark's Nostalgic Houses and Shops Collection, complete with interior décor, also perfect for twelfth scale. The pedal boat, car and plane are now rare ornaments and collectors' items.

When searching for Santa's helpers (elves) I found so many delightful sets

會OPEN HOUSE









it made it difficult to choose, so I chose them all. The tiniest kitchen and workshop's elves are OOAK and I am so excited to have found them. The elves in the bedroom are planning some serious mischief while the elves in the bath are secretly wrapping gifts.

Santa and his reindeer are preparing for a long bountiful Christmas eve. Reindeer were attached to the roof by drilling tiny holes in hooves, inserting nails, marking roof where nails meet, drilling tiny holes in roof, and pressing into roof. Reins were made from a thin strip of leather.

The carousel horse was an ornament atop a music box that no longer played. While the music box no longer worked I was not able to dispose of the horse. I kept the broken box for years and finally found the perfect new home for its horse.

Santa Chef, an expert gingerbread house maker, was an ornament hanging on a display tree in a florist shop. He is among my favourite miniature finds.

The Christmas tree is lit with string lights attached to a battery pack, hidden behind the leather sofa. They operate by a remote control so no furniture has to be moved.

I love having this house, decorated for the holiday season, throughout the year. It provides Christmas cheer all year round.



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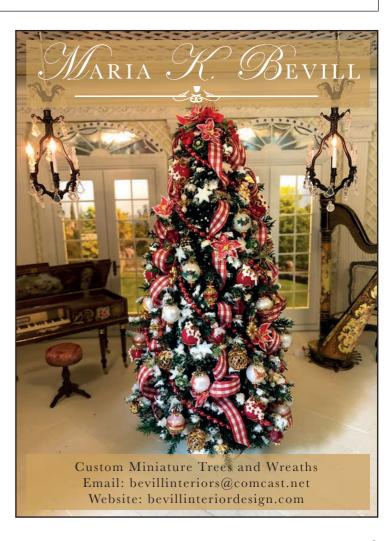
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Photographs at https://photos.app.goo. gl/57FA7D2ESUQw9xon9.

Contact: tim.lewis@live.com



WHEREIWORK

THIS MONTH WE VISIT THE WORKSPACE OF ANGELA LAW OF DANDYLION MINIATURES IN GERMANY

Hi Angela. Tell us about where you work? I

have my own little workshop space in my house in Hirschberg. I hope to expand onto another floor but am juggling between making my miniatures and renovating our house. At this point I truly believe that both my human house and my own doll's house are going to be lifelong projects that may never be completed.

But what fun there is to be had.

How long you've been making miniatures? Like many miniature artisans I started as a collector and hobbyist. I then progressed into making furniture for my own doll's house by seeking knowledge and ideas from other makers and old sources. I have now been producing doll's house furniture for over 10 years, some for my own collection and some as custom orders for private collectors.

Do you always make your minis in

the same place? No. To my husband's dismay I often sit in bed with a workboard on my lap working on my latest piece. I have destroyed many a duvet cover/throw from glues and spilled varnishes and paints this way. I'll also be doing the same thing while we're watching a film together in the lounge. I do tend to be

doing three or four activities at the same time, usually as follows: miniatures project/cooking a meal/watching a movie/doing admin or accounts; oh and doing anything our cats may require at any given time (yes I am a cat lady).

Do you work at set times? I try to have a daily

routine but sometimes you get inspiration or an idea that must be acted upon immediately or the moment is lost (I am sure this is the case with many miniaturists). Restricting creativity is almost impossible. My cats used to find this truly frustrating, but now we have feeding bowls with automatic timers.

What makes your space for mini making so special? It's light, airy and peaceful and it is all mine. Hirschberg is a beautiful place and is surrounded by trees and fresh air so the views are beautiful.

Do you keep your workspace private or do you let other people/pets in? My husband is not allowed in my working space.. EVER. This rule works because he has his own working space and has the same rule in place for me. My cats are allowed everywhere be-









cause.. well, because they are cats and how dare I impose any rules upon them.

Do you listen to music or the radio while you work? I tried listening to some music recently while working but found it hard to focus. I find music distracting as it stirs up emotions (for me personally that is). Also, I have so many deliveries of materials I need to be able to hear the door especially as my Deutsche Post lady, as lovely as she is, is very German and expects

a prompt door opening even though I have to run down three flights of stairs. Personally I find music a little distracting as I like to actually switch off to listen and enjoy music and in order to create my pieces I am very switched on and focused.

Name one thing that is banned from your workspace. Smoking.

Describe your workspace in five words. A small, quiet, organised chaos.



What is the one thing that your workspace can't be missing?
Wood

What would be your dream workspace? The Citadel Library on Game of Thrones. There'd be books on the history of furniture along with habitats, culture and traditions and the drawers, labelled alphabetically, would be filled with the materials needed to make all manner of miniatures. I would also require the large keys to lock myself in and the white walkers

out. I would, of course, have pre-fitted it with an ensuite bathroom and an ample supply of food and a cat and husband corner (in that order).

Lovely to chat with you Angela.

DandyLion Miniatures
by Angela Law
www.etsy.com/shop/
DandyLionMiniatures



"MY DEUTSCHE POST LADY, AS LOVELY AS SHE IS, IS VERY GERMAN AND EXPECTS A PROMPT DOOR OPENING EVEN THOUGH I HAVE TO RUN DOWN THREE FLIGHTS OF STAIRS"

BOX CLEVER

Chocolates from friend inspired new workshop

Santa's Workshop proves Christmas is for remembering family and friends. Carol tells us how this beautiful box was put together with a lot of minis and much love

BY CAROL LEWIS

aking a Christmas project is a lovely way to have a special display and I loved the idea of the challenge when my best friend, a non-miniaturist, gave me a wooden cut out tree box containing chocolates. She sent them with a comment: "I nearly ate the contents as I know you will be more thrilled with the box and can do something with it." What a true pal; she knows me so well!

So the idea was born for a twelfth scale Santa's workshop since I knew I could incorporate this with the wooden sleigh that I had had for some years but needed a better setting to show it off. I never consider myself good with wood and was delighted when a friend had made me the sleigh and I could add all the detail, which includes a spare snowman jumper, knitted by another friend.

The wooden hobby horse rests upon a hidden music button and, when gently pressed down, Jingle Bells plays. The largest of the gifts awaiting delivery is, of course, a doll's house.

The reindeer were from a toy shop and the leather reins cut from an old diary cover so that they were thin enough to be in scale. I bought Father Christmas from a doll's house fair when I fell in love with his kindly face, just like the real thing.

I was able to make the overall snowy base with paper mache, lots of white paint and lots of artificial snow — a messy, but fun job. The trees are large model railway ones with added snow. The delivery train was a kit designed as a children's toy box for a doll's house nursery with the addition of another engine and wagon. Setting it onto a piece of railway track that I found in my late father's stash, the scene began to come to life. The mail sacks contain individually printed, cut and handwritten letters and the buffer at the end

of the line is the decoration that my grandmother used every year on her homemade Christmas cake.

The initial tree box opened at an angle and so a shaped floor, with hidden recess for the lighting, was needed and the inner shelving had to be cut at very precise angle to straighten up the unusual slope. These were placed at the right height to show off the books and toys but also allowed me to add in a fireplace to warm the feet — if the reindeer slippers under the table weren't quite enough.

It was great fun finding reindeerthemed items to decorate the mantelpiece and to have the workshop contain items that reflect the way in which Father Christmas might sit and work. On his chaotic table he has his own supply of biscuits, cake, chocolates and a glass of beer to hand. There's also a magnifying glass, made from the end of a cocktail stick and the inner metal circle of a ballpoint pen, in case the eyesight becomes the subject of a bit too much jollity. There is the magic key for gaining access to the houses without a chimney while the naughty and nice letters

have been individually printed with the names of my friends.

I made as many of the toys and books as possible, tweak-



BOX CLEVER







ing and personalising along the way. The teddies were all the same colour before one was dunked in tea and one in coffee. The toy boats were made by another friend. The boxed games were made from sourcing images of classic, and largely undateable, items on the computer and adding coloured sides before making these up into boxes for stacking on the shelves. The same method was used to make jigsaw boxes and I was particularly pleased to find an older cruise ship image which, by adding our surname to the box sides, reminds me of the trip

my husband and I took to celebrate a significant wedding anniversary.

The books, some opening and some not, were made in much the same way but I was also able to scan in the covers of full-size books that I own and treasure — my late mother's Peter Pan, the first of my late father's published books, my first ever Ladybird book (Tootles the Taxi in case you were wondering!) and my daughter's favourite, Beauty and the Beast.

There has to be order to the workshop but I liked the idea of things being everywhere — from ballet shoes and jack-in-the-boxes to skipping ropes and xylophones (not quite A–Z but pretty comprehensive, I think). Each time even I see something new again.

The holly sprigs around the shelves are made from a paper kit — with fine tweezers and a lot of patience. I really enjoyed adding, adding and then adding more but was especially pleased with the personalised detail which will always remind me of family and friends. And to finish things off I included a fire bucket.. for elf and safety reasons.



Put together a lovely shabby chic bench

Elize shows you how to create a bench with a vintage vibe that will look good in your house or roombox all year round

BY FLT7F VAN FS

charm.

e all want to cuddle up on a cosy bench at the end of the year. If you like vintage and shabby chic this little DIY bench is easy to make and can be made from leftovers. It's mini eye candy when finished. Hope you all have as much fun making one as I did!

Step 1. Cut out the parts and sand gently.



Step 2. Glue the side boards to the back board. When working with card

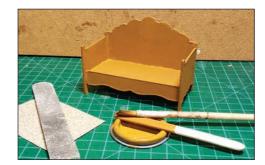
board or kraft board I like to use book-

binders glue. It becomes a bit elastic,

leaves room to bend and shape and

also it sets really fast. Works like a

Step 3. Glue in the seat piece. Make sure it's level. This is also the moment you can easily scrape off extra glue with a toothpick if needed. Glue the last front part in. Align the bottom with the side pieces. Let dry.



Step 4. Gently sand away any irregularities. Paint everything in your base colour. This will be the colour that will show up a little, after applying the top paint and sanding. Be sure that all the little corners and cracks are painted well.





Step 5. Cut the coffee stir sticks, 2 for the front and 3 for each side. I measured them manually after step 3. I work with a mini chopper, but a knife or box cutter does the trick too.



Step 6. Glue on the coffee stir sticks. Measure the available space for the armrests and cut some staircase spindles to fit. Glue them in. Then glue on 3-D stickers or other embellishments like small jewellery findings. After the glue is dry, sand gently. Paint all the details in your chosen base colour.

You will need

- Cardboard or Kraft Board 2mm
- Tacky or bookbinder's glue
- Coffee stir sticks
- 2 staircase spindles
- 3-D or foam stickers
- Chalk paint in 2 colours
- Fabric and foam/poly filler
- Pastels
- Hair spray or matt varnish
- Fine sandpaper



Step 7. After the paint is dry, gently sand away any irregularities. Sanding will make or break your project at this stage. So take your time, be gentle. Apply a second coat of paint. Let it dry for at least 5 hours. If the glue lets go on the edges, use a tiny drop of super glue to fix.

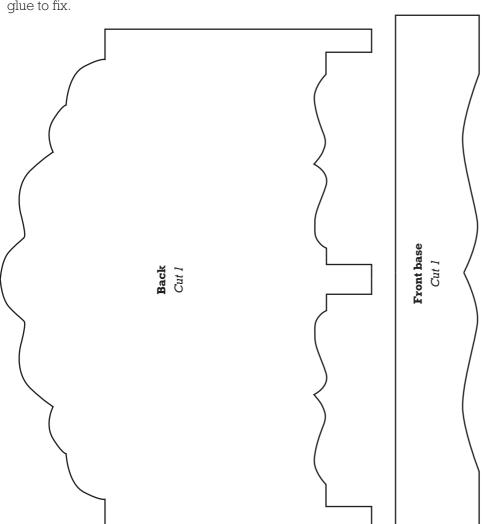


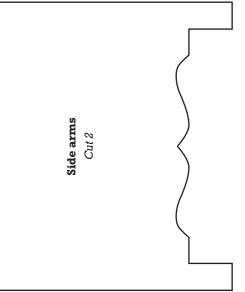


Step 8. To make it look aged, keep sanding. You want to see the base colour through the top coat. How much is up to you. Sanded too much? No problem, you can correct a mismatch of colours with artist pastels.

Step 9. I use hair spray to fix the pastels. Works like a charm. Now make a cushion from your favourite material and sit back and enjoy your new miniature bench!

Shown below is another design option.





Seat Cut 1



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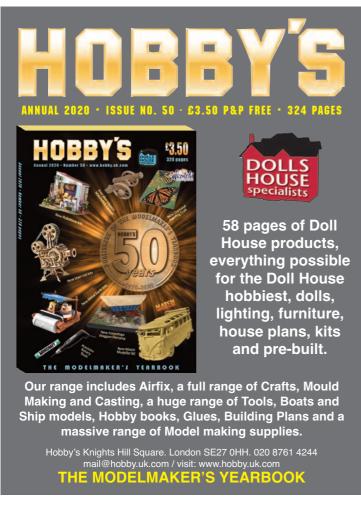
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HOUSE PROUD









NANCY'S BIG ON A LITTLE CHRISTMAS

BY SANDRA HARDING

s soon as I saw Nancy Haponiuk's photographs I knew lacksquare that she was a lady that loved Christmas and I simply had to ask her to show you some of her collection.

Nancy tells me that she has between 30 and 35 houses and I was uncertain what to expect when she told me the number.

However, it seems they are not all about Christmas and I'm not sure whether that's a relief or not, being another Christmas lover. There is a castle and three log cabins which were all designed and built by Nancy and, at this point, I have to ask her if any of

them have a Christmas tree. Maybe we can see them another time and check for ourselves.

The collection started 20 years ago when she bought a small house that was already assembled to see if she would enjoy the hobby. Luckily, she did, in a big way obviously. Having previously designed and created three plastic canvas needlepoint houses and a small house, I suppose it did not come as a surprise.

The first actual Christmas-themed house Nancy created she believes was her third build, and she quickly realised that was what she wanted to do...

and do it forever.

She tells me that if she didn't stop herself, and give herself a good talking to, then every house she created would be Christmas-themed, as she loves it so much. The more she works on doll's houses, the more she learns.

She admits that she has never made anything from a kit without some modification, additions, dormers or roof changes. Nancy is continually trying out new things and experimenting with ideas that she would never have dreamed of ten years ago, and the skills and artistry show in her delightful work.







Quick and easy

Make a nativity scene using card and string

BY SANDRA HARDING

- Cut out the card pieces for the floor, making sure the figures and animals fit nicely. Then cut out the back, the sides and the roof.
- My sizes are 2 1/2" across x 1 3/4' deep for the floor. Back is 2 1/2" across x 2" at the peak. Sides are about 1" high. You may wish to vary them to suit.
- Paint both sides of all the cardboard pieces brown, including the edges, and let them dry. I created the wooden effect by using the paint undiluted, straight from the tube, and painting up and down in streaks.
- Fold the roof down in the middle to form the ridge and glue all the pieces together. Let it dry.
- Separate the string into wispy pieces and chop it up with scissors. Glue a layer onto the bottom of the stable and let it dry.
- Glue a little silver star into the centre back wall or on the front.
- Glue the little figures and animals into the stable and glue the angel



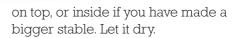




You will need

- Pack of nativity buttons (a set of figures and animals).

 Mine were bought
- Thickish cardboard for the stable (thicker card holds paint and shape better)
- Brown string for the traw
- One silver or gold star for above the cradle
- Brown acrylic paint and stiff paintbrush
- Glue, tweezers



• Thanks to Angela Kinnunen for the idea



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WHERE READERS SHARE PROJECTS THEY'RE PROUD OF, HOWEVER SMALL. EMAIL YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO RICHARD@ASHDOWN.CO.UK







Dogs have fun at Christmas

BY SANDRA HARDING

thought that this little scene looked so cute and, for the many dog lovers out there, I asked the owner to tell us about it.

It seems that Kristine Askenback-Lanigan is an avid miniaturist and has many more boxes and creations to keep me busy for a while. In the meantime, back to this one. Kristine loves to create small scenes using mostly vintage, second hand and recycled items of all kinds, with the goal of creating something new, beautiful and fun. And this one sure is fun. The box measures 13" x 7" x 5" and, much to my amusement, turns out to be a re-cycled, vintage bread bin which is painted grey and

waxed. Well I never.

It is lined with vintage wallpaper and carpeting and contains a variety of items bought, traded or made by Kristine. The soil in the plant pot for instance was from her real garden. The comfy black sofa, obviously taken over by the dogs, is made of old leather and I love the great dane



I love the great dane with a hat on, while the cat is trying to look innocent amidst all the chaos.

with a hat on, while the cat is trying to look innocent amidst all the chaos. They have made an awful mess of the fairy lights and wrapping paper and I dread to imagine what the owners will think when they return.

Kristine tells me that she likes to bring fun to her miniatures and loves to add a whimsical element to her scenes. She finds it very easy to get lost in her room box, bread bin worlds and I can't think of a better place to get lost in than a bread bin. Sharing them with others and seeing the smiles they bring is what she believes miniatures is about, and we can all relate to that I think.

It is obvious that Kristine is a recycling expert and I look forward to showing you even more of her delightfully thrifty, fun little projects.





Pay a visit to Gale's grottos

BY SANDRA HARDING

little while ago I asked my Facebook friends if they had Christmas projects they would like to see in the magazine and, I have to admit, I got a really good response. Amongst the replies was a very jolly collection from Gale Barnes.

There is the Father and Mother Christmas grottos, one lit up at night, and the other in the day time. The snow scene is where the children visit before they go in to see Santa and these were made in 2018 as part of Gale's department store. They are made from recycled pieces of MDF 12"

wide x 8" deep x 8" high.

Gale lives in Norwich and everything she couldn't make was locally bought from The Works, Flying Tiger, Paperchase and Jarrolds during the run up to Christmas. The walls, flooring and ceiling were decorated with free wallpaper samples, contact vinyls and downloaded pictures, and she used many "come in handy" objects from her stash box. She also made good use of charity shops, car boots and an upmarket flea market in the city centre. The dolls and figures were bought from a local doll's house shop.



Give the gift that keeps on giving...

A magazine subscription makes a fantastic Christmas gift. You can buy online at any time, and we'll ensure that the first issue for the gift subscription will arrive after Christmas Day. It will be beautifully packaged and come complete with a beautiful free mini gift. So have an inspiring copy of Dolls House World delivered direct to a friend or partner's door during the year! It really is the gift that continues to keep on giving long after Santa has put away his miniatures.



會 SMALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Gale's first doll's house was made by her mother as a Christmas present when she was about five-years-old and that started her love for miniatures. Her husband loves to help and often gives her advice, sometimes taken, sometimes ignored, but he has a keen eye when they go to car boots, often asking "will this be any good?". I like this man already.





Kristine's Christmas frivolities

BY SANDRA HARDING

hen Kristine Lanigan
Askenback sent me a
collection of Christmasthemed photographs I wondered
which ones you might like to see.
However, as usual, I liked them all so
decided to show them all in one go.

The first one is the delightful dining room which is set into a window space on a raised dais, with a chandelier above, held in place with Velcro. The table is made of clear plastic with legs of gold painted beads, and each chair was decorated with a crystal bead to look like ice. Kristine made the glittering chandelier from a tea light candle, medicine bottle cap, and a candle ring of green glass beads. Very glamorous.

I looked at Kristine's idea of a kitchen at Christmas and decided that whoever lives there really must get her family to help. It's obvious the poor lady is overworked and overstretched, but then I remembered. That's what happens to most of us at Christmas time.

All the cupboards are open, the milk is spilt, the pets are running amok and somewhere in the house, so are the children. Kristine put the kitchen together specifically for Santa's House, which is filled with memories of Christmases past including two Hallmark ornaments for the stove and refrigerator. The seat cover and curtains are made from gingerbread and candy cane patterned fabric.

I must confess that I haven't seen a Christmas-themed bed before, and it's very unlikely that you have ever seen one quite like the bed in Kristine's imagination either. It's full of gorgeousness and every bit of it is dripping with opulence. It is twelfth scale and the posts and top are made of bass wood. The bed was hand painted in gold paint with real 14k gold flecks (did I mention opulence?) and dressed in cotton, with a soft white blanket and dark green crushed velvet comforter for effect. There are also icicles, snowflakes, lace, ribbon, buttons, paper wedding invitations and a costume jewellery necklace to embellish it. I think I really must mention opulence again.

Kristine tells me that these scenes are all from her Santa's House and now I am wondering if we should see the whole house as well. I must ask her.

Extra storey and a roof added to Tudor house



Her sister was going to abandon a neglected doll's house but Sandra couldn't stand by and let that happen. Here's part two of the rescue mission



BY SANDRA HARDING

ast issue you will recall that I saved my sister's doll's house from going to the tip and ended up taking it home, which gave me a bit of a problem.

You see I had already decided on my next project — a large museum with several floors — and I had been collecting all things Egyptian and Chinese for some time. The space had been carefully measured and allocated to line up with my other houses, and was very specific. Now I had a problem as to where to put the Tudor house as it would not fit in the allocated space meant for the museum and, as anyone who has visited my home will know, I haven't got much room anywhere else.

We studied the building for ages and even had a couple of restless nights. It was very important to both my husband and I that we kept as much of Pat's work as possible.

My sister had originally designed a two-storey building. After much soulsearching we decided we would make it into three storeys, with attic rooms too. This meant we could keep all the rooms that Pat had created and were able to add more, including a garderobe and a priest hole, with priest skeleton of course.

I had a glut of skeletons at that time bought from Shepherd Miniatures, so I also put one in the garderobe, to amuse my grandsons when they visited. It had to be seen, or why bother, so my husband created a swinging out

sort of lavatory, with candle lights for convenience. During all this time my husband had been carefully measuring and allowing for the electrics — I wanted a lot and kept changing my

When he began sawing we soon had bits of rooms, walls etc all over the place, all carefully (at times) laid out. Pat's kitchen and fabulous fireplaces were moved, one to the side in an anteroom, and one from the side of the kitchen to the back for greater effect, as it's fabulous. The "middle" room was moved to the next floor and became the meeting room, and the entrance door and stairs stayed where they were, whilst the anterooms and stairs also remained the same.

A new base was created for each floor as I wanted them to be independently lit, and removable, as it was still pretty big and heavy. We followed Pat's



style in the 'new build' as we liked the old and dirty effect she had created. All of the dust and most of the cobwebs are real by the way, not added or created, and taken from my real house.

Pat never got as far as the roof so my husband designed the roof, cutting out cardboard templates, before using plywood for the real thing. It had to have beams of course. Friend Ellen had made me my lady's bed and I wanted it to fit between the rafters. It also had an anteroom, where her nursemaid and servant sleep, using straw mattresses. I stained the walls on this floor using cold tea and coffee, and then had to lighten it as I got carried away.

There is a pretend door to imaginary stairs at the back for the servants to use. The fire was from stock and my husband made the surround. I began making the several large, open fires using a base, and adding red and black glass beads, covered in twigs, with ash from a friend's wood burner. I made sure I left a hole behind to take a light. I added fake smoke (thanks Jenny Kelm) for effect and the pea bulb I put up every chimney shows this off

The fronts were made using plywood, to allow for the windows and door we already had from Pat's originals, and together with the lovely bay window from a car boot sale. I had a seat made in that and added a lovely window ledge on another floor. All the little pieces of extra wooden curves

THE TUDOR HOUSE















THE TUDOR HOUSE











All of the dust and most of the cobwebs are real by the way.

THE TUDOR HOUSE







and fill-ins were cut out for the front and sides to match the Tudor bits, and then stained to match. The roof was covered in ready-made, red tiling from Jennifer's of Walsall which we bought in sheets, which were lightweight and so easy to apply.

The new wood panelling inside was





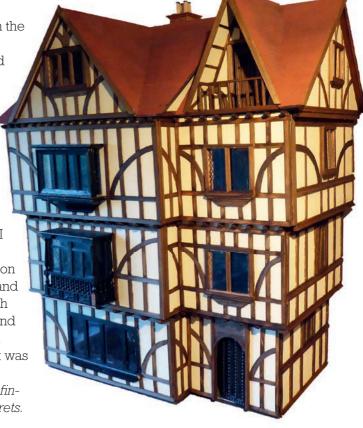


designed and stained to match the original pieces, and the floor-boards were all cut and stained to match those in place.

Hinges were added to the front doors and the garderobe, which was made as a separate item to be seen from the outside. I knew that I wanted the main bedroom to be quite grand so I painted the B&Q embossed wallpaper in pretty colours, just because I wanted to.

By now I had quite a collection of things to go into this house and had already begun playing with them, actually whilst my husband was still putting it together. You know what I mean don't you? It was irresistible.

Next issue I will show you the finished house and tell you its secrets.



PROX CLEVER



Vicki's big room box is full of festive wonder

Vicki's Christmas creation is packed with ideas we could all use in our rooms, and you can even get on track with a train coming out of the wall





BY SANDRA HARDING

icki Macleod, who lives in Tasmania, Australia, sure is a busy girl having made 17 room boxes and filled domes for herself, several friends as well as family members.

This Christmas room box is one she has hung onto and, along with other favourites, are kept in her spare bedroom. Her husband kindly made special shelving for them, although she is fast running out of room.

A lady after my own heart she has been collecting tiny bears and dolls way before she even started making miniatures — it's the fascination with anything tiny and beautiful that's the big draw. After retiring, Vicki discovered doll's house miniatures and the little doll dressed in white was Vicki's first ever miniature purchase, which opened a whole new world to her. Luckily her husband and daughters appreciate the amount of work that goes into her creations.

I feel rather silly calling this a room box as that description does not do justice to this very large Christmas creation, full of wonder and delight. It does after all measure 31" wide x 15" deep x 12" high, so you can see my point. Vicki drew up a rough sketch and, using MDF (and her husband's table saw and shed), she created the box. It has a rebate on either side with sliding glass covers.

The floor is covered in fabric from her stock while the furniture is all made from blocks of pine covered with balsa

wood, stained with mahogany and a coat of semi gloss to finish. Very effective. There are a vast amount of cards, bags, boxes, Christmas parcels, stockings, and so much more, all made using Excel on the computer then printed out, folded, glued and sprinkled with glitter. How easy that sounds, but it takes time and patience to get such a perfect result. I know from experience.

I totally adore the train coming out of the wall — ingenious. It took Vicki a week to make using offcuts of wood covered in paint and paper. The wheels are made from press stud, and the tracks are made from aida cloth, which she pulled apart to get the right effect. What an imagination Vicki has to come up with that idea.

A little home made snow was added to the train and I just had to ask how she mixed her snow. Vicki tells me she uses white paint and glue, sprinkled with a mixture of glitter and baby talcum powder. Well I never. So much more interesting than frozen water vapour, and definitely harder to make do you think?

The lovely little reindeer are made from tiny branches from her alder tree and the string of fairy lights were hung up to add sparkle. There is a Santa's list of presents, and the sack was meant for pencils, but adapted, and filled to overflowing with presents. The Santa was made by Paolo Ragonesi and the chair was recovered. The rest of the many hundreds of items were Christ-

BOX CLEVER

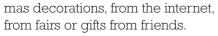












I will leave you to look again at the train and all the other little delights, and I have to admit that I really want to see this one for myself. If only I had a tardis.







Pretty up the bedroom with Christmas style

If you think you can't go too over the top with Christmas in miniature then this project is for you.. complete with fur pillows and throws

BY DEBBIE BOOTH

ey everyone! I'm Debbie from Ribbonwood Cottage on Etsy. I am sharing a very simple but pretty DIY for making Christmas bedding for a doll's house bed. The sheet, valance, duvet and fur throw are from one pattern and the pillows and cushions are made using one pattern. Let's get started.

Assemble

These various bedding items are made using the same measurements and assembled all the same way. If your bed is smaller, be sure to use smaller proportions than I have.

You will need

- 1/2 yard of white cotton
- 1/4 yard solid red cotton
- 1/4 yard red plaid or Christmas
- 1/4 yard white fleece fur or similar looking fabric (fur throw and pillows)
- 1/4 yard red flannel
- l yard of 1/4" flat wide cotton lace (top sheet edge)
- l yard small white bullion fringe or 1/4" wide flat wide cotton lace (valance)
- Small package of polyester fibrefill stuffing
- Needle and thread
- Sewing machine
- Scissors
- Ruler

Step 1. Cut a rectangle measuring 7 1/4" x 14" from white cotton fabric (bed sheet), red cotton fabric (blanket) and red check (throw). The finished duvet and sheets will be 6 3/4" square.





Step 2. Take the white cotton rectangle and fold it in half. Pin it together and then sew around the edges using a 1/4" seam allowance. Leave a 2" opening along one side for turning.

Step 3. Once sewn, remove pins and turn it right side out. Fold in the opening, pin and sew closed.





Step 4. On top of the 4 sides, pin a flat wide cotton lace to the very edge so that the lace peeks over the edge. Sew the lace to the white cotton sheet in a straight line.

Step 5. Repeat sewing process with another white cotton rectangle (valance), solid red fabric and red check fabric. Lace is not added to the red pieces unless desired. Press them.

Step 6. Take the base valance and pin bullion fringe or lace to the edge on all four sides.

Step 7. Carefully sew this to the outer edge of the white cotton base. Remove pins and trim threads.

Step 8. Starting with the white cotton valance, spritz lightly with water or Sizing used for ironing.

Step 9. Fold it over the bed mattress and use your hands to mould the valance over the mattress and down the sides of the bed.

MINI MAKES

Step 10. Place a white cotton sheet down with the lace at the very top. See my photo for reference.



Step 11. Next, place the red check quilt over the white sheet. If needed, pull the white cotton sheet up towards the top and fold it over the red check. If the white sheet is shorter on the bottom that is okay, it won't be seen.

Step 12. Again, spritz lightly with water or sizing and mould with hands. At this point I place books against the sides of the bed so the bedding will dry in place. You want it to hang down and not stick out. If you don't place something with weight against the bedding the final bedding product will look like you laid several hot pads on top of one another. Not a look you want in your doll's house.



Step 13. The solid red duvet is to be folded in half and placed towards the bottom of the bed. This allows the red plaid and the lace edged sheet to show.

Assembling pillows

The pillows are made using the same formula. It is very simple. Although I provide measurements, the pillows could be made smaller if needed by subtracting 1/4" or 1/2" off the measurements. Twelfth scale beds are often 4" or more wide, so the pillows need to be large enough but not too small to fill in this amount.



Step 14. To make the pillows and cushions, cut 2 rectangles from the red check that measure 2" x 4". Cut 4 rectangles each from the white fleece/fur. With the right sides together, fold each rectangle in half and pin together. Sew around the edges using a 1/4" seam allowance. Leave a little over 1" opening for turning.

Step 15. Sew all the pillows, remove pins and trim threads. Turn right side out

Step 16. Stuff with a very small amount of fibrefill stuffing. Pin and sew opening closed.

Step 17. A smaller accent pillow can be made using the same directions and 1 3/4" x 3 1/2" measurements. To make the throw we will use a smaller measurement. Initially I made a throw using the exact same measurements as the duvet but it ended up being too large.

Bed throw



Step 18. Cut a 5 1/4" square from the red flannel and the white fleece fur. With right sides together, pin the two together. Sew around the edge of the four sides using a 1/4" seam allowance. Leave a 2" opening for turning. Remove the pins and trim the threads. Turn right side out.

Step 19. Fold the opening in 1/4" and pin closed. Hand sew opening closed.

Step 20. When draping over the bed, I spritzed with a considerable amount of sizing (used for ironing). While it was very damp I used straight pins like a tack and pinned the throw into place. Once it dried into place I removed the pins.

A small wreath, Christmas stocking, teddy bear or a present can be placed in front of the accent pillow for added embellishment.

Here are some other ideas for bedding:

- Using 1 solid and 1 print, find fabrics with other colour schemes like dark green or burgundy.
- Use taffeta, satin or other specialty fabrics.
- Flannels, plaids, or buffalo checks can be used for a rustic feel.
- Place a coordinating Christmas wreath above the bed to tie the colours together.

Merry Christmas everyone!

www.etsy.com/uk/shop/ RibbonwoodCottage















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Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and more government regulations stringent various parts of the UK, we have had to cancel our Dolls House Fairs for the rest of 2020.

We have a fair schedule in place for 2021, because of the uncertainty and indecision on whether some of our earlier 2021 shows will be going ahead in the New Year, we would ask our customers check out our website www.mgmfairs.co.uk

or go to our Facebook Page, to find out the latest situation and information.













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會SHOP VISIT













FULL OF MINI DELIGI

Sandra chats with the owner of Bijou in Braintree, Essex

BY SANDRA HARDING

hen Linda Abel was three she asked Father Christmas for a doll's house. She continued to ask him for one every year until she was 36 when

she eventually decided he couldn't be relied upon, so she bought her own.

The decision was made when Linda saw a Robert Stubbs house and decided to order one. Luckily it coincided with her being left some money by her grandmother, which covered the cost - serendipity! Linda's daughter, Helen, was three when they visited Robert's workshop and spent the evening sweeping his workshop.

The house was delivered six months later, but it took five years to furnish as Linda could only buy things when she could afford them. One of the items in the house is a button used as a frame for a tiny photograph of her grandmother — a lovely touch. I really must ask Linda if we can show you her doll's house separately sometime.



Although Linda had been a childminder for thirty years she also trained as an interior designer with a friend. When the friend opened a shop she asked Linda if she would like

to join her in the business.

When the friend moved on Linda took over, creating Bijou. She has always been creative and found that the most popular items in the shop were the tiny things that she made herself, so she slowly expanded her own range. She also stocks Stacey's Miniature Masonry, Wonham Collection, Streets Ahead, Tasma Products, Reutters and Le ToyVan (a children's range) and much more.

The doll's houses that Linda has in stock are all unique as they are made locally by various talented makers. She told me: "Some of the makers are carpenters, who use straight lines, and some are artists who never use a ruler." Her comment made me laugh as I knew just what she meant. Something for everybody here I reckon.

Linda's philosophy is that she doesn't need to sell a doll's house as the customer who wants to buy one when they come into the shop will buy one anyway. Sounds sensible.

One thing that Linda has noticed during the past year is that customers who once spent hours browsing, chatting, and treating it like an event, now want to get their purchases over as soon as possible. They are not as happy, chatty or relaxed as usual and we both thought this was a sad reflection on the current situation.

After spending some time talking to Linda I can say that those customers are missing out by not chatting to this hard working, interesting and highly entertaining lady.



Bijou Dollshouses Blake House Craft Centre, CM77 6SH tel: 01376 335 111 email: linda@minibijou.com web: www.minibijou.com

會FESTIVE CHEERS

Christmas in a matchbox

he Spielzug Museum in Basel, Switzerland, is staging a seasonal exhibition entitled 'Patriotic Christmas decorations'.

On display are Christmas tree decorations that were manufactured during both World Wars. Many fathers and sons were apart from their families. This resulted in Christmas trees being sent to the front in matchboxes, while at home the Christian message of peace was given a new interpretation.

By showcasing items from the museum's own collection and loaned items from the private collection of Alfred Dünnenberger, as well as from The Library Am Guisanplatz BiG, visitors can see how Christmas during the two World Wars was celebrated slightly differently. The display runs from November 21 to February 14 2021.

 Spielzeug Welten Museum Basel www.swmb.museum

















Cut out a quick Christmas tree

BY WENDY CROSTHWAITE

Here's how to put together a quick Christmas tree with all the trimmings.



• Cut out the three sections of the traditional green tree from the Cutouts page (P91). I found the magazine paper was firm enough, but if you want a sturdier tree you can glue each section onto thin card and then cut out.



• Fold each of the tree sections in half, folding inwards.





- Now glue half of the back of one section to the folded half of another section. Repeat until you have joined all three sections and formed a type of pyramid.
- Trim edges for a neater tree.
- Now you have a fully-decorated tree that will stand proudly ir any room of your house.
- For the modern tree repeat the tutorial using the five coloured trees on the Cutouts page.



Win fabulous cotton plus a pattern and needles

haron Blackburn, of Sharons Mini Knits, has recently taken over as UK wholesaler for the supply of Venne Col Cotton to both individual buyers and traders.

She told us: "I just love working with this fabulous cotton, so much so I never use anything else for my miniknits."

Now here's your chance to try the Venne cottons for yourself. You can win a set of the cottons along with Sharon's lovely jumper pattern and needles, which are handmade by her. She said: "Venne cottons are fabulous, ideal for miniknitting. They're so soft, drape well and once used you won't want to use anything else."

All you have to do to have a chance of winning is to find the missing word in the Christmas word search puzzle.

Email the missing word, together with your name and address, to richard@ashdown.co.uk. Closing date is January 10, 2021.

 Visit Sharon's website at sharonsminiknits.co.uk to find everything you need for your mini knitting, including a vast amount of colours from her Venne Cotton range, knitting needles, doll's house dolls, and lots of other mini goodies.

You can also find her on Etsy: sharonsminiknits.etsy.com

If you are not the lucky winner you can buy the kit at a discounted price of £10 plus postage.



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合FEATURE

















Georgian house for sale

his beautiful Georgian house has just come onto the market. It belonged to passionate collector Maggie Davis who spent 20 years creating her dream house.

The house became a major feature of the family sitting room in Bracknell, Berkshire and was admired by her husband, three children and six grand-children.

But Maggie has passed away and her family are trying to find a new home for the house. Her son, Tim Lewis, said: "With over £10,000 of receipts for the house and contents this amazing property is now to be sold as one lot and offers in the region of £3,000 will be accepted by her family."

• You can contact Tim at Tim.Lewis@Live.com if you are interested and check out the online photos at https://photos.app.goo. gl/57FA7D2ESUQw9xon9



Christmas stocking

BY DEBBIE BOOTH

You will need

- White felt
- White fringe or fur
- Glue and hot glue gun
- White glue
- Paint brush
- Greenery, berries, sticks
- White glitter
- 1/8'' satin ribbon

Step 1. Cut 2 white felt pieces shaped like a stocking.

Step 2. Brush glue on one wool felt stocking piece, and put the folded ribbon for hanging inside. Glue stocking together.

Step 3. Trim the top by gluing white fur, bullion fringe or lace.

Step 4. Hot glue greenery and berries to the front. Add glitter quickly and it will adhere to the glue.

Hang the stocking from the fireplace, throw on a bed, or lay in front of a miniature Christmas tree for added decoration.

Terri's ladder tree grows into a permanent display

Putting away her wonderful ladder display every Christmas was guite an effort. The solution was to leave it out all year round for everyone to enjoy



BY SANDRA HARDING

must admit that this creation by Terri Como puts to shame my own little tree which sits in the corner at Christmas, so I have added another bauble or two and an old bit of tinsel to mine

To be serious though, this really did make me look twice, and I just had to know more about it. Terri credits her uncle for her love of miniatures as, when she was a child, he had a whole room filled with a Lionel train layout. Terri loved to look at this scenic creation and she remembers the buildings. bridges, train stations, milk carts, and coal carts. There were people in and out of houses, trees and street lights, and a steam engine that whistled and blew smoke.

Terri as been collecting her houses

for more than thirty years finding them in all sorts of different places, including pound shops and garage sales. There are now twelve residential homes, a newly acquired barn, a cathedral and twelve shops. These include a florists, a ski shop, a hot cocoa stand, a movie theatre, a diner, a sportswear store, a book store, a bar and even a petrol station.

Putting them all on display was a problem until she had the idea of buying a six foot tall, antique, wooden step ladder. She was inspired by seeing a florist displaying plants on a ladder in the shape of a tree — not the first thing I would have thought of, but my goodness what a brilliant idea.

Terri added a graduating plank of wood across each pair of rungs to

create the Christmas tree shape, and painted the ladder and the planks green. She then added rolls of white cotton to simulate snow, stapled garlands to each layer and sprayed it with snow. Then came the final part of placing the much-loved buildings and scenes in place. What fun and laughter that must have created.

Terri always used to put up a Christmas tree for her daughter's birthday on December 11. Several years ago she decided not to have a traditional tree and just set up her Christmas ladder tree, much to the delight of her children and grandchildren who all loved it.

They all felt sad when it came down again after Christmas. Terri did this for years, before deciding that it was a lot











of work, and that she loved it so much she would leave it up all year round – hurrah.

Terri does not have a doll's house but creates miniature dioramas. For her daughter she created a bakery cafe with rooftop dining, then came a greenhouse for her sister, a sitting library in a cigar box, and a sewing room in another cigar box. She created a back door and porch in a shadow box, and also has individual displays which she has created through the years. What a perfect way to spend retirement?

This is certainly one of the most interesting and gorgeous Christmasthemed articles I have written and I will never forget this inspired ladder tree — stunning. I hope that Terri lets us show you more of her lovely creations in the months to come.

Building blocks in easy box

If you're looking for a suitable toy to add to your Christmas scene then have a go at this set of building blocks in a box

BY GILL RANCE

Step 1. For the box, cut two pieces of balsa wood measuring 3.5cm x 2.5cm for the lid section and base, two pieces measuring 3.1cm x 1cm, and two pieces measuring 2.4cm x 1cm for the side sections.

Step 2. Lightly sand to make sure you have no jagged edges and that the pieces will fit flush.

Step 3. If you want to stain or paint the wood of your box then do so now and allow to dry. This is impor-

You will need

- Thin sheets of balsa wood or similar
- Small offcuts of balsa wood in various shapes
- Coloured pens or paint
- Picture or sticker for label see Cutouts on P 93

tant because if you assemble the box first and accidentally get glue where you don't want it, the stain or colour may not take in this area.

Step 4. When you are ready to assemble the box, glue the sides to the base, forming a box shape. Leave to dry.

Step 5. From the off cuts of balsa, use a craft knife or cutters to snip a selection of small pieces as squares, triangles, cylinder shapes and oblongs to fill the box. I have painted just a few of them in a bright colour but if you want a modern look you could paint them all using primary colours: red, yellow and blue.

Step 6. Fill the box and glue a suitable label onto the lid. We've included some labels to the Cutouts section on P93 but you might prefer to design your own.



TOPTIP

Why not decorate the square blocks with letters or animal pictures? You could draw these on with colourful pens, or if you can find some small enough, cut up stickers or motifs from wrapping paper and glue them on.

Gingerbread Kitchen is full of festive treasures

Teresa Layman made a rug and then decided she needed a house to go round it — so this beautiful home was created for elves who build gingerbread houses

BY MARTHA PUFF AND TERESA LAYMAN. PHOTOGRAPHY BY SALLY ANDERSEN-BRUCE, SABPHOTO.COM

he Gingerbread Kitchen doll's house was designed and built for the sole purpose of enchanting the viewer," says Teresa Layman. "A year went into its making. It tells the story of the daily lives of the North Pole elves

who build the gingerbread houses at Christmastime. Everywhere you look, you catch glimpses of their enchanting imaginary lives."

For more than thirty-five years, Teresa has been a miniaturist with a keen interest in architecture. "I am particularly fond of the whimsy and charm of the storybook-style from the 1920s,"

She added: "There are many picturesque storybook structures in the area where I grew up. It is a style that ignites my imagination. I took some workshops from Rik Pierce, Frogmorton Studios (one of my heroes) and learned to work in Creative Paperclay. His old-world picturesque structures have a lot of the same characteristics."

Two creative pursuits

A trained baker, Teresa is the author of two fine books on the art of making beautiful, detailed gingerbread houses. Gingerbread: Things to Make and Bake (1992) and Gingerbread for All Seasons (1997) are both published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, N.Y. An accomplished needlework artist, Teresa is an IGMA Artisan. She worked for the Vogue Pattern Com-



pany for fifteen years. Since 2004, she has run Teresa Layman Designs, a needlework design company. Assisting in the business are her very supportive husband Ken and her good friend Gretchen.

"Self-taught, I spend my time creating new designs for miniature knotwork kits," Teresa explains. "I consider myself very fortunate to be able to do the art I love the most." Her twelfth scale rug designs are a mix of contemporary, whimsical, and traditional in a number of shapes. Kits are available through needlework shops and online. You can call Teresa directly to order kits with floss included. Besides miniature knotwork, she offers cross stitch kits with the same attention to colour and detail. She strives to include fine details in all aspects of her

It was a natural progression for Teresa to combine her love of miniatures and rug-making with her love of gingerbread. All of the rugs in the house are her designs. "The Gingerbread Reel is the rug that started it all," Teresa says. "I made the rug because I like gingerbread things. Then, when it was finished, of course I needed a house to go around it. That is when the Gingerbread Kitchen was born."

Delightful details

The exterior of the building is textured to look like gingerbread.



Exquisite details abound. There is something interesting—often fanciful-to see wherever you look. Many of the details are handmade by Teresa. "I love using found bits of treasure in new ways to give history and personality to my creations," she explains. "I put an unlikely handmade weathervane on the top of the Tower. To show the house stands at the North Pole, the weathervane points to the South in every

When you look into the back opening of the house, there is so much to see. The interior is filled with whimsical features and great detail. Teresa painted the border around the top of the wall in the workroom freehand. Little gingerbread houses sit all about. In keeping with the theme, three gingercoloured chubby cats by Annie Willis loll about. Upstairs the elves' combination bedroom and playroom is filled with exceptionally fine handcrafted toys and books.

Curtis, Karen, Judy, and Max are the beautiful little elves who live and work in the Gingerbread Kitchen. Created by British doll artist Jane Davies, each figure is designed, sculpted, and made





Left: The upstairs room where the elves play and sleep. Beds are dressed in antique handmade laces from Teresa's collection. Above: The storybook Gingerbread Kitchen doll's house with tower. A pair of goldfinches live in the little birdhouse on the snowcovered front lawn. One sits on the branch of the bare tree.

Below: The downstairs workroom and kitchen.









Top: The downstairs workroom and kitchen with bedroom above.

Left: The outgoing little elf Karen takes a break from all of her decorating to chat for a bit with one of the friendly kitties.

Above: At the base of the tree is a tiny door, just big enough for the wee mouse made by Kathi Kuti.

Acknowledgment

■ The Gingerbread Kitchen Doll's House is now part of the Kathleen Savage Browning Miniatures Collection. It is on display seasonally at the Kentucky Gateway Museum centre, Maysville, KY. Teresa's photos used by courtesy of the Kathleen Savage Browning Miniatures Collection. If you have an opportunity, visit the Kentucky Gateway Museum to see Kaye's unrivalled collection of miniatures housed in a 3400-square-foot exhibit hall.



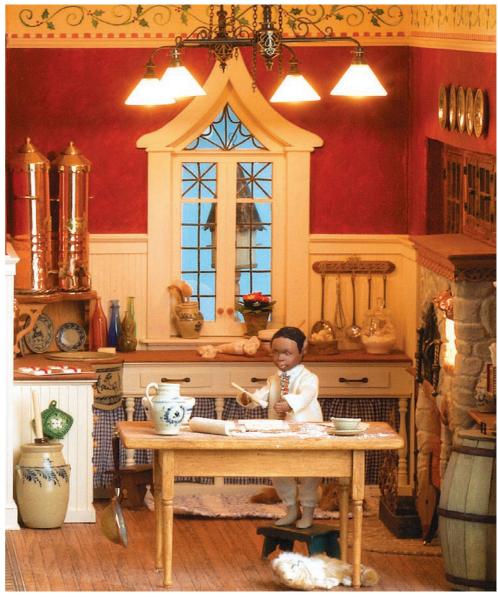


in Jane's unique style. She has built a worldwide reputation for the artistry of her work.

Buildings and cottages

The Gingerbread Kitchen Doll's House is now part of the Kathleen Savage Browning Miniature Collection. It is housed at the Kentucky Gateway Museum centre in Maysville, Kentucky and is on display seasonally. A very beautiful photo book of this captivating house is available by contacting Teresa.

In addition to the Gingerbread Kitchen, Teresa has built Pippin Lodge, an exquisitely finished Hobbit House from a Rik Pierce workshop. It, too, is part of the Kathleen Browning Miniature Collection. "Kaye has been very supportive of my work," Teresa says.

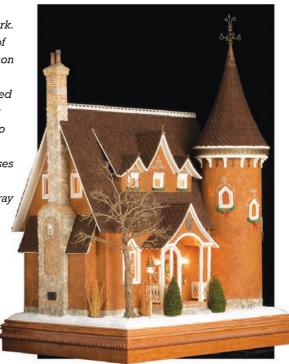


Above left: The small elf Curtis enjoys a quick cocoa break from his decorating work.

Right: The gingerbread walls are layers of paint over Creative Paperclay with cinnamon rubbed into the surface. Each roof shingle was cut by hand from Paperclay and painted with several coats of "chocolate" after they were dry. Tower windows are removable so the tiny candle lamps can be extracted to change the light bulbs, and the tower houses the circular staircase. Fancy gold filigree trim made from a vintage 1940's dresser tray adorns the tower roof.

Nibble, nibble, little mouse. Who is nibbling at my house?

> "Hansel and Gretel" Fairy Tale(Brothers Grimm, 1812)





Far left: A welcoming front entrance to the gingerbread home! The whimsical peaked roof porch has fanciful white trim as well as exquisite porch lights by Scott Hughes of Scott's Lighting. The trees and doorbell with fanciful brass plate are handmade by Teresa.

Left: This chimney was made using Creative Paperclay brick and stone work techniques learned from Rik Pierce, Frogmorton Studios. The moon-face tile is a scrimshaw piece by artist Rachel Badeau.

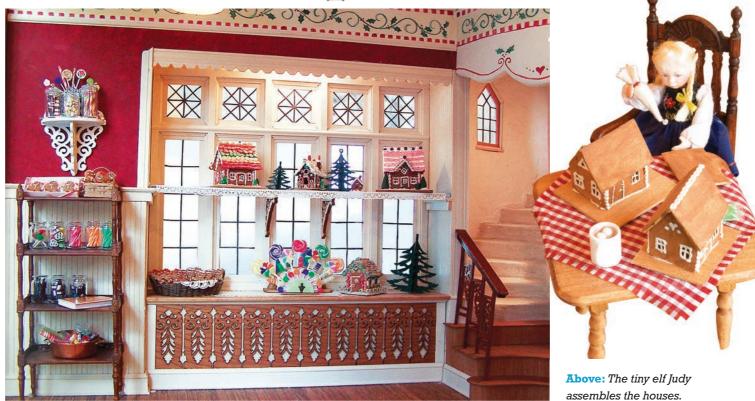
Centre: Teresa made the "ribbon" part of the pewter welcome house sign from a 1920's award pin, and the vintage reindeer part is a bit earlier.

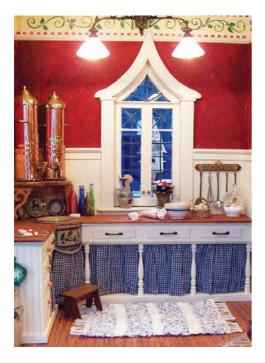
Below left: View of the downstairs fireplace surrounded by custom kitchen cabinets from Ken Byers, Shaker Works West. Upstairs, you get a glimpse of the fabulous toys made by many different miniature artisans.

Mini Hooked Rugs

"The Gingerbread Reel

is the rug that started it all. I made this little rug because I like gingerbread things," says Teresa Layman. "This technique makes a very convincing twelfth scale replica of a hooked rug. When the rug was completed, I needed a house to go around it, so the Gingerbread Kitchen was born." Miniature knotwork has become one of Teresa's favourite creative pursuits. Here are some twelfth scale rugs from the Gingerbread Kitchen Doll's House. She offers all of these miniature rugs and several more, either finished or in kit form. To see more designs, visit her website. Sometimes Teresa has finished rugs available in her Etsy shop. She is an IGMA Artisan in Needlework.







Above: Custom kitchen counter by David Krupick. Sink and sink apron with reindeer by Jane Graber. She made an entire set of stoneware reindeer dishes to match. Copper water tanks by Lara Copper, Australia.

Above right: Red chair by Bespaq reupholstered by Teresa. Books on bookshelf by

Grace Griffin, TreeFeathers Miniatures.



I love using found bits of treasure in new ways to give history and personality to my creations.

Long term, Teresa's goal is to produce all of the buildings that might be found in Santa's village at the North Pole. She was working on yet another North Pole She was working on a snowflake factory a while ago. Teresa said: "In my world snowflakes come from a snow globe, so I am building

a rather impressive one for inside the building. The bottom level of the Snowflake Factory will be a computer centre, but the whole thing will have a Victorian Steampunk feel to it. I want everything to be beautifully crafted of mahogany and brass. So much to do, so little time!"

Special project marked birth of third daughter

When Rebecca decided to start on her first fantasy scene just days after giving birth she knew exactly what she wanted to create to capture the Christmas spirit



BY REBECCA MICALLEE

hristmas is a very big deal for me. I have loved the season since I was a child. I was one of those little girls that truly believed in Santa and a small part of me still does. I can remember the warmth and love Christmas brought with it and today I try to create the same memories for my own children to cherish.

It was late September in 2012 after I had just given birth to my third daughter. I was getting this lovely Christmas feeling about being with my family and our new addition. I wanted to make something special for my older kids and to mark the first Christmas of the new baby so decided to start on a mini

I have built various styles of houses in different periods over 23 years as

a miniaturist, but I had never tried my hand with a fantasy creation before. And I had a very clear image of what I wanted — I just could imagine how Santa did his toys, how it all worked out

I chose a Dolls House Emporium kit with the perfect shape and firstly used lots of ice lolly sticks to cover the outside and even the floors. I have changed most of the actual kit but this is how I imagined it would look like. I even designed and made my own Christmas stained glass and made a front Christmassy porch. The building was decorated with rich red and green colours to blend with the wood effect walls. The roof was covered in synthetic snow.

Underneath the staircase I made

shelves filled with toys ready to be wrapped up and there is a little nook for Darby, a little fawn which Santa had found injured in the woods and took in.

The workshop is split into four separate areas. At Santa's station the big man himself crafts the wonderful toys for the boys and girls and here you can see some of the lovely white metal tools that my dear father painted for me.

The sewing station is where Mrs Claus sews and makes dolls. Here you can see a partly finished doll which I made out of polymer clay. From here the toys go to the main station to be refined where the elves, Twinkle and Tinsel, finish them off before they go on the shelves or drying rack. At the wrapping up station every toy is boxed







and wrapped up before they go into Santa's magical sack.

In Santa's quarters on the upper floor there is a wood stove, a bed sleigh and two important desks. Santa's writing desk is where does most of his paperwork, including checking the good list and reading every little child's letter. The letters are sorted into four continent boxes which are filled up magically. At the navigation desk Santa plans his long journey on Christmas Eve, studies the weather forecast and does lots of map reading. In the corner sits Jinx the little kitten.

Most of the furniture, soft furniture and polymer clay miniatures were made by me. I managed to finish it three days before Christmas and my kids love it.

• To see more details of how this project was done visit Rebecca's blog: www.myminiatureworld.blogspot.com.









Christmas tree skirt to dress up that mini tree

Take an old tin can and an assortment of festive fabrics to create a wonderful, colourful decoration for your Christmas scene

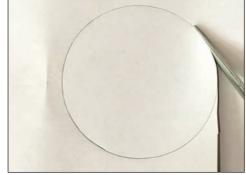
BY KAREN HRTT7

ake your miniature Christmas scene even more special with a homemade tree skirt.

Making the pattern



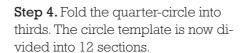
Step 1. Draw a circle the size you want the finished Christmas tree skirt to be. I used a peanut can lid as a template.



Step 2. Cut out the circle from regular printing paper and then fold it in half.



Step 3. Then fold that half-circle in half.







Step 5. Cut out one of the sections of the circle. This is your pattern piece for the skirt panels.

Stitching sections together



Step 6. Add a 1/8" allowance on each side of the pie-shaped piece. Cut a total of 12 sections from your fabrics.

You will need

- An assortment of fabrics at least 3 different small-scale prints and/or solids
- Cotton flannel to use as batting
- Scissors
- Thread, straight pins, needles
- Sewing machine optional
- Ruler
- Paper for pattern
- Iron

TOPTIP

When deciding on the width be sure to place the tree on the circle and place both in your space to be sure it fits.

會MINI MAKES





Step 7. Arrange your 12 sections into a circle and place the sections right sides together. Stitch together using your sewing machine or by hand.



Step 8. Continue to stitch the sections together and then press the seams flat with an iron.

Layering and quilting

Step 9. Layer the skirt top, the flannel and the backing fabric together. Place straight pins in each section to hold the layers in place.



Step 10. Using a contrasting thread, carefully hand-quilt along one side of each seam as shown in the photo.

Step 11. Stitch 1/8" from the outer edge of the tree skirt.

Step 12. Trim away the batting and the backing along the edge of the tree skirt.

Binding





Step 13. Cut a strip of bias fabric to bind the edges of the tree skirt.



Step 14. Stitch the binding to the right side of the tree skirt. Do this around all the sides.



Step 15. Turn the binding to the back side and press with your iron. Tuck and pin the raw edge of the binding under and then blind-stitch the binding.

Finished tree skirt



Step 16. Stitch a piece of thin ribbon or cord to tie the skirt around the tree.

Put the tree skirt in place and enjoy your hard work!

Christmas sho







▲ Alla Domboski What a loving twelfth scale depiction of Santa and Mrs Clause. These dolls were hand-sculpted with care.

◀ Erika Pitera Three styles of festive Christmas cookies,

all handmade in twelfth scale.

• The Petite Provisions Co. Email: erika@petiteprovisionsco.com Etsy: petiteprovisionsco.etsy.com Website: www.petiteprovisionsco.com

▼Linda Boltrek A twelfth scale Christmas stocking full of handmade mini goodies.

WCase

◀ Lorraine Scuderi

A beautifully made twelfth scale Christmas log bed that looks cosy and comfy with festive country style blankets and pillows.



▶ Jeanne Rullie

Hand-sculpted and dressed with a cape and a full beard, this St. Nicholas chats with a red cardinal.





▶ Alina Senechko

These little mice stand at 5 1/2" tall and are made from merino wool, felt, wool yarn, polymer clay, glass eyes, leather, embroidery thread and modelling wire. Perfect for a mini mouse house!



the rainbow and candy canes on top.

• Maria K. Bevill

A beautifully handmade twelfth scale

Christmas tree with all the colours of

► Maria K Bevill

Custom Miniature Trees and Wreaths Email: bevillinteriors@comcast.net





▲ Lisa Scherer

These Santas are made of clay, wood and wire. Each with their own delightful character.

Meet the dynamic duo of Mini Maniacs

We chat with talented makers Lisa Meyer and Stephanie Watt about the miniatures they create and how they find time for other hobbies like ballroom dancing and rock collecting



BY TOAN MCKENZIE

took some time to ask these two talented business partners a few questions so we could get to know

What do you create in miniature format?

Lisa: I create twelfth scale accessories focusing on Christmas and other holidays, wizardry, boudoir luxuries, and battery-lit creations.

Stephanie: I create twelfth scale miniatures. I am fascinated by cultures from around the world and am a devout lover of nature. I have been making miniature Kachina dolls, wind chimes, Asian gongs, rain sticks (that work), dream catchers, native style drums and flocking animals.

When did you first become interested in miniatures?

Lisa: I have always had miniatures in my life, even as a child. However, I became serious about miniatures after making my mum a 1/48th scale Christmas village in 2000.

I then turned to creating music boxes with twelfth scenes on their tops. Then I opened an Etsy store in 2011. Then in 2017, opened Mini Maniacs Miniatures with Stephanie.

Stephanie: I have been so fortunate to have the opportunity to travel around the world and realised that every place I've been I have purchased something miniature! My house is filled with these treasures but my first

interest in creating something miniature was inspired by my dear friend and business partner, Lisa, who at the time had over a decade of experience. She was very supportive and once she gave me some suggestions, I took them and ran with them and haven't stopped since 2016!

Did you have a doll's house as a

Lisa: My parents and grandparents gave me a six room doll's house with furniture when I turned twelve. I had always enjoyed miniatures and home décor (even at that age).

Stephanie: I did not have a doll's house, but had lots of dolls, vehicles, and furniture for my Barbie dolls as well as other creative and scientific toys. However, I did have other wonderful miniature toys including a miniature store that was the size of me when I was five!



Is there anything in particular that you'd like our readers to know about

Lisa: My boyfriend and I enjoy visiting thrift shops. One random weekday he picked me up from work as usual and as we travelled home I felt this strong urgency to go to the Good Will store that we'd visited many times before. We were tired and hungry for dinner, however I could not shake the compulsion to go to the store.

When we turned into the parking lot and faced the store – there was a very large unfinished doll's house in the window! I couldn't believe it. It had seven rooms, an outside deck and a tall attic space all across the house covered by a hinged top with a chimney. It was not a kit – someone had carefully handcrafted it in strong wood with a moving door and windows intact.

It was about 45" long, 16" deep, and 27" tall. The price on it was \$50 (40). I looked at my boyfriend and said "I have to buy this." We looked at each other and shivered a bit over the spookiness of finding the doll's house as if it was waiting for me. The salesperson said that it had only arrived the night before.

Being a collector of vinyl records

Left: Lisa's tiny gingerbread house is just taller than a ten pence piece Above: A harvest wheel barrow filled with polymer clay fruits and veggies made by Stephanie.





Top: A 6" tall Christmas tree, by Lisa, with handmade decorations, blinking lights, skirt and hand-wrapped presents.

Top right: Hand-crafted 2"- 4" trees and lighted manger scene by Lisa. The larger manger was hand-painted by Stephanie.

Above: Festive wreath and gingerbread doll by Lisa.



and memorabilia himself, my boyfriend completely understood why I had to have it and put it into the car and carried it into the living room where it stayed until we moved to a larger apartment.

I have it now on my dresser and know exactly what I am going to do with it. I feel joy looking at it every day, knowing that whoever made it, sent me to buy it and knows that their doll's house found a good home.

Stephanie: My boyfriend and I are rock hounds and we go to every gem show in our area. We absolutely love learning about different gems and minerals and our house has become somewhat of a museum filled with an array of stones, minerals and fossils.

We have also gone to Herkimer County and did a considerable amount of excavating to find Herkimer diamond crystals. We came home with a handful of 'diamonds' and four big buckets of rocks. I also enjoy ballroom dancing, Middle Eastern dancing and Argentine Tango. I am an award-winning ballroom dancer and also enjoy dancing and performing dance exhibitions with my boyfriend, who is a professional ballroom dancer and

instructor. We both are avid gardeners. What are your careers away from miniatures?

Lisa: I am also a professional musician, a classical singer and church choir director. In addition, I am the Production Coordinator for a university department of music where I administrate the daily operations, concert schedule, handle recruitment, and manage two concert series and several annual music festivals.

Stephanie: I am a concert pianist and recording artist and full-time university music professor where I have served as the Chair of the Music Department and currently am the Director of Music Theory and Composition and Piano Studies. Last January I received my Usui Reiki Master Teacher certificate and will be taking classes in New York City to receive my certificate in Integrative Sound and Music specialisation.

My goal is to amalgamate my love of music, miniatures, jewellery making and Reiki into a series of healing and creative classes and experiences.

Where do you sell your minis?

Lisa: Stephanie and I participate in









doll's house shows. Our website can now take on-line orders. I also have my own Etsy store, Minis with Music.

Stephanie: I also have my own Etsy and eBay stores — just look out for Imagination Miniatures!

Have you made any specialty miniature items?

Lisa: I have to say that when the International Guild of Miniature Artisans asked to include one of my gold and white sparkling six-inch lighted Christmas trees in their 40th Anniversary auctions it was a great honour for me. To have my creation included in



Top: These animals are hand-painted and flocked by Stephanie using cotton, acrylic yarn and flocking fibres.

Top right: Porcelain and metal steer skulls, painted and decorated by Stephanie. Above: Lisa made this twelfth fireplace overflowing with handmade and decorated minis and it also features flickering lights in the hearth.

Right: This Morning Singer Kachina is 2 1/2" tall and was hand-carved/painted by Stephanie.





such an esteemed show and event was exciting and meaningful.

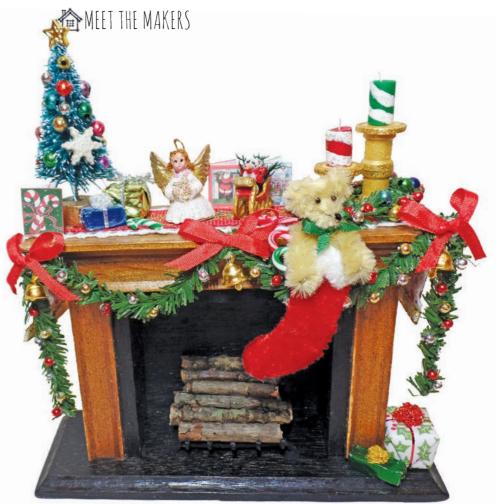
Stephanie: The International Guild of Miniature Artisans requested that one of my Aboriginal Masks be displayed and auctioned off at their 40th year show this year. That was an amazing honour!

What do you love most about miniatures?

Lisa: I enjoy the fact that there is so much variety in the materials and mediums that one can use to create so many different objects. No one can get bored with so much to use and create.

Stephanie: I love that you can use any kind of medium to develop your creation. I love painting, working with wood, sewing, jewellery making, working with clay and anything I can get my hands on. The sky's the limit!

Do you have any formal training in



Top left: A tiny rain stick that actually works was proudly made by Stephanie.

Left: Stephanie made this realistic twelfth scale communal drum from scratch!

Above: 4" wide fireplace by Lisa. It is filled with handmade and decorated miniatures.

your miniature field?

Lisa: I took a painting class in high school, but other than that, I have had no formal training.

Stephanie: I did take a miniature cake making class with Ruth Stewart, a soldering class with Ron Stetkewicz and a class on doll's house wiring with the owner of Cir-kit.

What is your most difficult task involved with making miniatures?

Lisa: Time. I am a perfectionist, and detailed work is very important to me. Detail is what makes miniatures look as real as possible. Unfortunately, that does take time and the hours always seem to go by too quickly when I create.

Stephanie: Sculpting clay. I have a deep desire to learn how to sculpt clay, especially making faces, hands and feet!

What do you think about the future of miniatures?

Lisa: I have noticed, as both an attendee and a dealer that over the past few years I see more and more multigenerational participants; families of grandmother, daughter and granddaughter taking workshops and shopping together. I find that very encouraging for the future of miniatures.

Stephanie: I strongly feel that the interest in miniatures is growing and almost every day I see evidence of this in magazines, newspapers and commercials that may have a doll's house or some type of miniature in the background.

LITTLE LINKS:

Lisa Meyer and Stephanie Watt, Artists Mini Maniacs Miniatures, LLC tel: 001 347 278 3187

web: Minimaniacsminiatures.com
Instagram: minimaniacsminiatures



Knit a cute little dress ready for the party

This pattern for a lovely little dress has been designed to fit a doll 3 1/2 to four inches tall. What are you waiting for... get out the needles?



BY EDNA SALT

designed and knitted this party dress in a strong colour red, because I found that the white parts of the pattern looked like thin, white lace in contrast. The only addition was the thin ribbon for a sash, which would also look good in white.

What you do

1st Row: K2tog, K2, wrn, K1, wrn, (K2, Sl 1, K2tog, psso, K2, wrn, K1, wrn,) repeat to last 4 sts, K2, K2tog.

2nd Row: Purl

3rd Row: K2tog, K1, wrn, k3, wrn. (K1 Sl 1, K2tog, psso, k1 wrn K3, wrn), repeat to last 3 sts, K1, K2tog.

4th Row: Purl

You will need

- Colcotton or similar 1-ply thread in red and white
- Needle Size 0.9mm (20)
- 2 Buttons
- Thin ribbon
- 0.6mm crochet hook

Abbreviations

K-knit, P-purl

K2tog - knit 2 together

Tbl - through back of loop

Sst – stocking stitch

Wrn - wool around needle

Dec - decrease

Sl l - slip l

Beg. - beginning

Psso – pass slipped stitch over

5th Row: K2tog, wrn, K5, wrn, (Sl 1, K2tog, psso, wrn K5 wrn) repeat to last 2 sts, K2tog.

6th Row: Purl

Change to white thread.

7th Row: Knit

8th Row: Knit

9th Row: K2 (K2tog, wrn) to last st, K1

10th Row: K

These 10 rows form the pattern, which should be repeated as instruct-

Front

Cast on 57 stitches with white thread.

Row 1: K through the back of each stitch - this gives a neat edge.

Row 2: Klrow.

Change to red thread, carrying white up leading edge.

Rows 3-12: Work pattern once.

Rows 13-22: Work pattern once.

Rows 23-28: Work to row 6 of 3rd pattern. Change to white thread.

Row 29: K5, (k1, k2tog) repeat to last 4 sts, K4 (41sts)

Rows 30-32: Complete 3rd pattern to

Rows 33-42: Work 4th repeat of pat-

Rows 43-48: Work to 6th row of 5th pattern.

Change to white thread.

Rows 49: K4, (k2tog, k6) 4 times,

k2tog, k3 (36sts)

Rows 50-52: Complete 5th pattern to 10th row. Cut off white.

Rows 53-54: Using red only, Sst 2

rows, starting with K row.

Row 55: K2tog, K10, K2tog, k8, K2tog, K10, K2tog. (32sts)

Row 56: Purl

Row 57: K2tog, K9, K2tog, k6, K2tog,

K9, K2tog. (28sts)

Row 58: Purl

Row 59: K2tog, K8, K2tog, k4, K2tog,

K8, K2tog. (24sts)

Row 60: Purl.

Row 61: (waist) K2 (wrn, k2tog) to

last 2 stitches, K2.

Row 62: P* Rows 63-70: Sst for 8 rows starting

with K row.

Rows 71-72: Cast off 3 sts at beginning of next 2 rows. (18sts)

Rows 73-74: K2tog at beginning of next 2 rows. (16sts).

Rows 75-84: Sst 10 rows, starting with K row.

Row 85: K 5, cast off 6, K5, turn. Work on these 5sts.

Row 86: Dec 1 st at neck edge.

Row 87: Working on these 4 sts, P 1

Row 88-91: Sst 4 rows.

Row 92: Cast off.

Rejoin wool to 5 sts left on LH needle, wrong side facing and P2 tog, P4. Work to match other side, and cast off.

Back

Work as front to *

Row 63: K12, turn. Work on these 12 sts, putting remaining sts on safety pin

Row 64: Cast on 2, K2, P to end of

會MINI KNITS



row. (14sts)

Row 65-70: 6 rows Sst., keeping K2 at start of each purl row up to neck.

Row 71: Cast off 3sts, K to end of row Row 72: P

Row 73: K2 tog at armhole edge, K9

Row 74: Next row - P

Rows 75-87: Sst 13 rows, starting with K row.

Row 88: Cast off 5 sts at back edge, work to end.

Rows 89-91: 3 rows s-st. Cast off.

Row 63: Rejoin wool to remaining 12 sts, right side facing, and cast on 2sts, Kto end of row (14 sts)

Row 64: P12, K2. (Keep 2sts K at end of each purl row to neck edge)

Row 65-69: 5 rows Sst.

Row 70: Cast off 3 sts, purl to last 2 sts, k2

Row 71: K to last 2 sts, K2tog.

Row 72: Purl to last 2 sts, K2

Row 73: K1, wrn, k2tog, K to end. (Buttonhole)

Complete to match right side, mak-

ing a further buttonhole 2 rows before shoulder shaping.

Sleeves (make 2)

Cast on 25 sts.

Rows 1-10: Work 1 pattern cut off white. Rows 11-15: Work 5 rows of 2nd pattern. (Adjust length here by knitting more patterns if required)

Row 16: K

Row 17: K1, (wrn, K2tog, K2tog,) repeat to last 3 sts, k3. (20sts)

Row 18: K

Rows 19-26: Work 8 rows Sst.

Rows 27-28: Cast off 3 sts at beg. of next 2 rows. (14sts)

Rows 29-34: Work 6 rows Sst.

Rows 35-38: Cast off 2 sts at beg. of next 4 rows. (6sts)

Cast off.

Making up

If necessary, wash gently in wool wash liquid, shape on towel and leave to dry naturally. When dry, lightly iron

into shape.

Join shoulder seams.

With 0.6 crochet hook, work 1 row d.c. around neckline.

Insert sleeves and sew into armholes.

Sew sleeve seams and body on both sides.

Insert 2mm ribbon or contrasting threads into waist.

Sew two 3mm buttons on back opening.

Make a stiff petticoat with gathered lace to puff out skirt.

Get ready for the party and off you go!

Talent on show in Jill's Jingles shop full of toys

This lovely little shop was built by Jill's husband a while ago for a club exhibition but it has lost none of its charm over the years

BY SANDRA HARDING

hat is it about tiny little toys that attract us miniaturists – or is that a silly question? We all know it's because they're small and cute, and remind us of the toys we had, or really wanted, when we were small... or is that just me!

We have featured many toy shops in the past but I never get tired of showing you another, so I hope that's all right with you. This one belongs to Jill Lucas, well-known to Facebook users and fellow miniaturists as she shows her work regularly at The Rainham and District Dolls House Group. Jill is, of course, the founder member of the club formed in 1993, and still going

This lovely little shop was built by

Peter, Jill's husband, about 16 years ago especially for a club exhibition, and is still proudly displayed every year. The shop measures 12" wide x19" high with room under the roof for a store at some time. It's called Jingles because Jill liked the name and thought it sounded happy, and she's

I love the fact that there is a chap above the shop making the toys. He is grandad Peter and the two children in the shop are his grandchildren, Jack and Jill, who are waiting for their mum to pick them up after school. What better place to wait but, luckily, they are careful children.

Jill wanted the rooms to be quite small so that she could fill them — she



used all the toys she had and kept on making more. These include the fort, all the gorgeous doll's houses on display, which she made from mount card, and those still being made by Peter. The fabulous rocking horse is made from obeche wood, which Jill painted in acrylic and then varnished. She made and added the leather saddle. reins and the wool mane and she really loved making it she tells me.

The jack-inthe-box and kites were taken from a Jane Harrop book on toy making, and the doll's pram and all other items are made from wood and painted using acrylics. Jill uses this paint as it is quick drying and Jill is 'impatient' (her word). I had to check twice when I was told that Jill had made Peter, and Jack and Jill out of Fimo as they look so realistic and quite at home in this setting.

I am quite jealous of this lady's talents although it's pretty obvious she does also work very hard at her creations. They are just perfectly lovely.





會SHOP AROUND



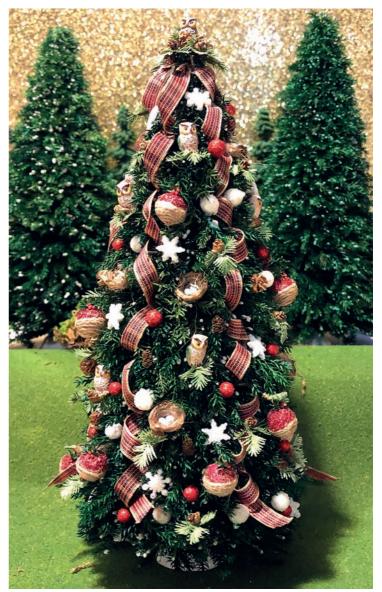












Maria's trees still ex

Award-winning Interior designer Maria Bevill is ready to trim your miniature tree from top to bottom! Let's get to know her and have a look at some of her festive creations

BY DEB WEISSLER

ll Maria wanted for Christmas was a realistic, decorated Christmas tree for her doll's house; one that she liked and that she could afford. When Santa failed to deliver, she sat down and made her own. Now she wakes up every day like it's Christmas morning, and with coffee mug in hand, she hurries down to her

workshop, excited to begin her day. To a growing list of miniature collectors, her basement has become a part of Santa's workshop!

As a graduate with training in fine arts and interior design, and with several award-winning designs to her credit, Maria approaches her Christmas tree decorating with the same

artistic sensibilities she has fine tuned over the years. "It must be pretty," Maria states emphatically.

Growing up in, like many young girls of her era, Maria loved playing with her tin doll's house and its colourful plastic furniture. As long as she could remember, she spent hours rearranging her doll's house furni-





cite her

ture and her own bedroom furniture, perhaps a harbinger of things to come. She credits her artistic Aunt Fay with inspiring her creative side.

"Aunt Fay won a doll's house at a church raffle that she decided to give to my daughter, Rachel, for Christmas. But by the time she got the doll's house into and out of her tiny Renault, the doll's house came out in pieces," Maria laughing recalls, "so I started putting it back together. I just became hooked to the point that when Rachel would come home from school she would tease me about playing with her doll's

house again."

When an elderly neighbour began taking classes to learn how to recreate the famous Thorne rooms being taught at the home of well-known miniature artist and author Virginia Merrill, she asked Maria to take them with her so as to provide much needed transportation.

That's when Maria learned to view miniatures not as toys buas true art forms.

In Maria's mind, a decorated Christmas tree's details and diversity are what inspire her most. "My









full size interior design rooms are very detailed. The details are subtle but there are layers upon layers upon layers present, and my trees enable me to create that same level of detailing. Christmas is one of those times that invites us to go overboard. We don't have to restrain ourselves. You can't have too much bling!" That applies to her miniature trees as well.

Her tree themes are not always associated with traditional styles such as Victorian, conventional, or country, which Maria admits are still crowd pleasers. Often she may awake in the middle of the night with a specialty theme suddenly swirling around in her head. With a multitude of images available online, she will collect an amalgam of details she then makes her own.

Recalling one of her favourite theme trees, "Truly Scrumptious", it's based upon a fictional character in the 1968 film Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. Her initial idea of a gingerbread men tree (a nod to the movie's song Toot Sweets), morphed into a delectable concoction of cookies, ice cream cones, cakes, tarts and just snowballed from there until the tree soon sported over 300 sweet treats. "It's truly scrumptious," Maria laughs.

With dozens of genres from playful to elegant, Maria's trees begin with a bottle bush form that soon groans under the added weight of hundreds of handmade ornaments, jewellery findings, ribbons, bows, nuts, berries, dried and handmade rice-paper flowers, beads, glitter, flocking, and

twinkling lights tucked among the faux lycopodium. Some of her ornaments are quite unconventional.

While attending the IGMA Guild School one summer, she admired the metal shavings being generated by



one classroom project and begged a friend to save all he could gather. By the end of the week, Maria went home with a bagful destined to become decorations.

No two trees are ever the same. "That's the wonderful thing about miniatures," Maria says. "There's always something new and exciting to try; so many avenues to explore. Her biggest obstacle when she began her creations was learning where in her process to add the string of lights, which are carefully tucked into the foliage and hard-wired to a plug.

At times Maria must go slightly out of scale to capture the look she is after. Too large however and the tree looks unwieldy; too small and one loses that sense of detail. It's a fine line to walk, but Maria's artistic eyes allow her to fine-tune each placement to achieve a pleasing form. "The ultimate goal is to have someone look at one of my trees and say 'how did you do that? Is that a real tree?'''

Excited by the results of her first trees, Maria sent photos of her pieces to miniature artists and friends Michael Walton and Paul Lim. Maria had commissioned Michael to create a custom Georgian doll's house some years before, and she thought the artists would serve as experienced soundingboards for her work. The pair was blown away by her work and insisted she should sell at shows. With tentative plans to feature a few of her trees at their show tables, by show time Maria's inventory had outgrown their allotted



My trees relax me and make me feel creatively fulfilled. How many aspects of your life can you say that about?

space and she needed her own table!

Now Maria wakes up excited each day. Her bread and butter interior design work comes second nature to her. It is her Christmas trees, wreaths, garlands, and door swags that wake her at night and pop her out of bed first thing in the morning. "Christmas is magic! My trees relax me and make me feel creatively fulfilled. How many aspects of your life can you say that about?"



Maria is able to translate her knowledge of interior design into her miniature creations. In tune with the latest design styles and colour palettes, she is able to translate what's hot in the market into her work, full size and tiny. Initially her trees were all 8 inches tall, but now she makes 6 inch tall trees for shorter ceiling heights.

In her basement workshop that Maria calls her "happy place", this busy artist works 25-30 hours a week on her miniatures. "One word describes my workshop-- chaos!" Maria laughs. "Shelf after shelf after shelf of

little boxes filled with findings, ribbon, beads, and all the things that I use or may use on my trees." Netflix comedies keep her company. Her greatest challenge: finding enough hours in the day to devote to her miniatures.

■ Maria hopes to be exhibiting at a future Kensington Dollshouse Festival.



Maria K. Bevill
Custom Miniature Trees and Wreaths
email: bevillinteriors@comcast.net
web: bevillinteriordesign.com

MALLER SCALES

Debbie's mini journey doing what she loves

Debbie Young talks about her life in miniatures and tells the heart-warming story of how her journey began with a chance meeting during a crossroads in her life

BY DEB WEISSLER

Debbie, tell us about yourself. I have loved miniatures my entire life. There is a photo on the website of my sister and me with my first doll's house. It was only natural when it came time for my first real job, I went to work for Village Toys in my hometown.

Village Toys must have inspired you.

Village Toys is where I would buy things for my doll's house; where I got my first job in high school; where I met my husband, Jeff; where I joined my first miniature club; and where I realised I could make miniatures that people were looking for.

So tell us how miniatures became your livelihood. In the summer of 1977, I purchased a business – a trunk full of beautiful Victorian clothes. I would go to miniature shows, photograph people all dressed up in them, and then reduce those photos to miniature and frame them.

In the summer of 1978. I drove across country and would stop at miniature stores along the way and sell the miniatures I had made. One of those items contained a picture frame made by Al and Betty Leeds. Store owners would ask me how Al was doing, as he was ill. When I got home, I called Betty Leeds, only to find she had just returned from her husband's funeral.

Not only had she lost her husband, but she was not sure what would happen to their business. She only knew

how to run half of it, but not the part Al had done, which was reducing photographs to go in the frames that they made. For me, that was the easy part.

Although I had never met this woman, I drove to her house in Mendocino and spent the next week teaching her everything I knew about photography and film development, and she taught me everything she knew about life.

I was at a crossroads, trying to decide what to do with my life; study photography or actually give miniatures a try. She told me that miniaturists were the greatest people in the world and that they would take care of me for the rest of my life. I had no idea how right she would be.

That's such a heart-warming story. Now you specialise in 1/48th scale.



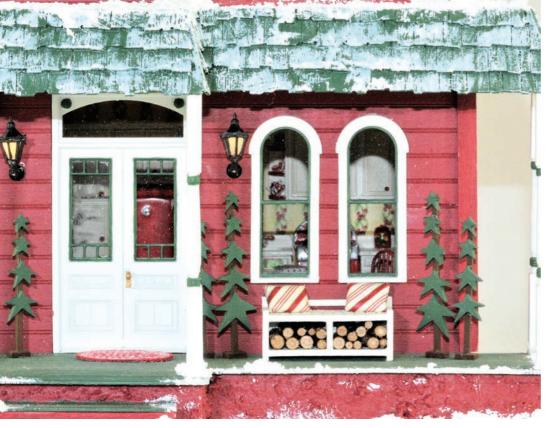


What is it about quarter scale that fascinates and attracts you as an artist? I love houses - dutch colonials, craftsman bungalows, english cottages, four squares, Cape May Victorians, and even the little campground cottages on Martha's Vineyard. Working in quarter scale, I can build all of these and tuck them into my bookcases and still have room for more. Quarter scale is manageable and so darn cute! You can completely build a house in a week and build a piece of furniture in a matter of hours.

So you've made this absolutely adorable Gothic Christmas House. Tell us **about it.** I love Christmas, so I always try to have some Christmas-themed houses as part of my line. When looking at a house to build, I use actual house plans and then try to decide where to open up the house to view the interior. For this house, I wanted a house that would sit against a wall without needing a turntable to see the entire thing.

This house is really a series of room boxes tied together with architectural elements. I wanted a nice front porch, one of my favourite elements of a house, but I also wanted a kitchen. So we came up with a way to have the kitchen slide out so you get the best of

Left: The window of the wrapping room.



She told me that miniaturists were the greatest people in the world

they sold like hotcakes. So for the next thirty-three years, no matter how hard I work, I never seem to keep up with the demand for the kits I make.

What sorts of materials go into your kits? Most are made of wood. Jeff does a lot of resin casting as well. For years we hand-cut everything, but we now have a laser. We also have a line of purchased injection moulded accessories.

How do you envision your kits being used by others? While I know some people make our kits exactly as we offer them, I think they are the minority. Most of our customers are so creative with their changes and additions that I am awed. I have long since stopped feeling bad when customers' houses turn out nicer than mine. I'm delighted!

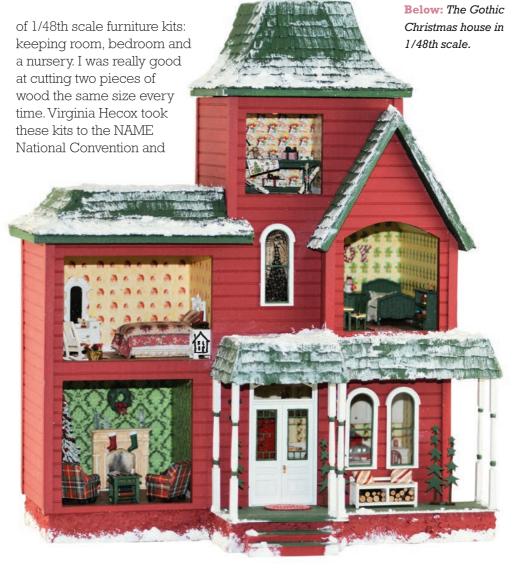
both worlds.

The house started out as a gothic display house all done up for halloween. It occurred to me it would look completely different with colour changes and some snow, and the structure soon became the Gothic Christmas House.

One of our goals in making kits is to design them so they go together easily. The walls in this house are all numbered and tabbed so they fit together easily. The roof line looks very complicated, but it's cast out of resin, so all that's needed is paint.

For you, what is there about Christmas that makes miniatures so much more fun and endearing? I love the Christmas colours; whether it's all white, pastels, or traditional red and green. Or maybe it's the glitter on so many things that makes it just a little more fun. One of the joys of working in miniature is you can have whatever your heart desires.

What was the first thing you made in 1/48th scale that made you realise you could make something others wanted? In 1986 I designed three sets



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What has been the most challenging kit you've ever produced at Young at Heart? I once did a quarter scale log cabin that was built, log by log, of over 200 individual logs that needed to be sanded and fit together. It was the most hated and loved house I've ever done.

Are your kits intended for all skill levels? We try to make kits for every skill level, although with a laser cutter it's easy to make things complicated. The price and number of pieces are clues to complexity. The more complicated, the higher the price. We try to design everything with ease of assembly in mind.

How many hours a week do you spend in your shop? When not at a show or visiting my grandchildren, I work from 10.00am in the morning until late at night, generally 1.00–2.00am, weekdays and weekends. I can count on one hand the number of times in the last 40 years that I have not had orders to fill.

You say you and your husband complement one other. Who does what?





come up with the ideas, Jeff cuts it, I build it, and then we make it into a kit. I prioritise, do the packing, and make travel arrangements. I write the instructions, take all the photographs, and keep track of the schedules. Jeff does whatever I ask him to do. He started off as a model builder, so he can build almost anything. He is a master at resin casting and runs the laser. He's brilliant with complicated roof lines.

What is there about kits that appeal to miniaturists? A kit gives you all the pieces and tells you what to do step-by-step. It allows the creator to make something amazing from a pile of wood and paper. And, should

you desire, you can draw on your own creativity. We all need a creative outlet where in the end we can all say "Come see what I made!".

Any final words? I truly am very fortunate. I have done what I love my entire adult life. I got to stay home with my kids as they grew up. I never had to get a real job. We have travelled to amazing places and along the way have met some truly wonderful people that have become our dear friends.

It really doesn't get much better than that.

Below: Santa's toy workshop made in 1/48th scale.



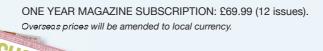


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MINI MAKES

Make your own cookie cutters

Sherrill wanted to make little gingerbread men for her doll's house but couldn't find the right cookie cutter. So she cut up a full-size pie tin!

BY SHERRILL NECESSARY

t Christmas my family always makes cookies using our metal cookie cutters. My favourite shape is the small gingerbread man. I thought I'd find some in twelfth scale to make miniature gingerbread cookies. When I couldn't find any that looked like my real life cookie cutters, I set out to make my own.



Step 1. Prepare the pie tin by cutting out the flat bottom. Score and cut a straight edge. Next, cut two strips about 1/8" wide.



Step 2. Use one strip to practice your bends. Make

some bends with the flat nose pliers and some with the round nose pliers. Try to make your bends straight in spite of the taper of the pliers nose.

Step 3. Find or draw the shape of the cookie and reduce it to the desired size. Mine is 1/2" tall.

Step 4. Decide on an inconspicuous place where the join will be. This is the starting place. Use the pliers to make sharp or curved bends to match shape. You might have to flatten a section to re-do it if it isn't right.



Step 5. Once you are pleased with the shape, cut the extra length so that it overlaps the beginning by about 1/8". Adjust the bends so the ends snug up against each other. They will stay, but you can also add a dot of super glue.





Step 6. Select or mix a gingerbread colour in polymer clay. Roll out a sheet about 1/16" thick. Press the cookie cutter into the clay.



Step 7. Arrange the cookies on the ceramic tile for baking. Try to use an oven that is not used for preparing food. Bake the cookies according

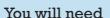
to the clay package instructions.



Step 8. Using a very fine tip paint marker or a tiny paint brush and craft paint, decorate your cookies.

Step 9. Arrange on a pretty plate and serve to your mini quests.

Use this tutorial to make other shapes like a tree or a snowman. You can also make cutters for sugar cookies. You can use this idea to make theme cookies any time of the year.



- Tin I used a lightweight metal pie tin
- Utility scissors to cut metal
- Pliers round and flat
- Super glue

- Polymer clay
- Roller for clay
- Tile for baking
- Toaster oven for

baking

Paint pen or paint and brush



Make this whimsical clock with festive feel

This type of clock harks back to when families got together to make different parts - you could try that with this mini version but we don't recommend it

BY LAURIE TACOBY

he Mora clock originated in Sweden in the mid 1700s, when the city's agricultural and mining industries suffered an economic recession.

Families participated in each step of making different parts of the clock. I am drawn to the Mora clock because of their whimsical look. I have seen many versions of this style of clock altered to fit different uses such as shelves to hold books or teapots. This festive version holds a Christmas tree to ring in the most wonderful time of the year.

Step 1. Transfer the pattern on to a piece of wood that is approximately 3/4" thick. For this project I used a piece of pine.



Step 2. Use a nail to mark the centre of the drill holes marked on the pattern piece into the wood. Drill out the 'belly' of the clock with a large drill bit. In this project I used a 15/16" drill bit which was perfect for creating the bottom arch of the belly.



Step 3. For a real ticking clock, you will need a clock insert piece and a hole in





the face of the wood that matches the size of your clock insert. I drilled out a hole in the face using the 15/16" drill bit and then traced the correct size with another template before expanding the hole to the correct size with a scroll saw.

Alternatively, you could save some time by printing or painting the image of the clock face onto the wood.

I think of the families brought together to create these handy works of art in that small town in Sweden.

You will need

- 3/4" thick wood
- 1/16" thick basswood
- Nail
- Scroll saw
- Craft knife
- Drill with 15/16" drill bit
- 1-7/16 (36 mm) clock insert
- Circle template
- Toothpicks
- Paint
- Decorative items





Step 4. When cutting out the shape of the clock with the scroll saw, I found it easier to cut some relief cuts around my pattern. These relief cuts made it easier to turn the blade around the curves while cutting.



Step 5. I used a piece of 1/16" thick basswood and toothpicks to make the decorative embellishments on base of the clock. These pieces can be cut with a sharp craft knife.

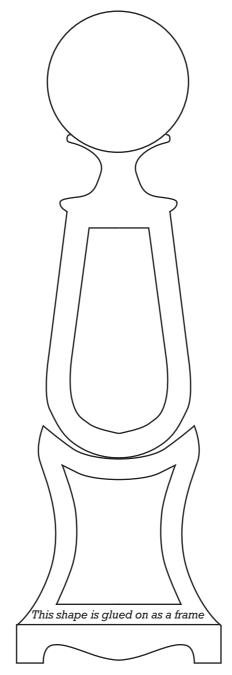
Step 6. Now its time to decorate to your preferences. I used a coat of grey paint and weathered it with some sandpaper to give it that antique Christmas decoration look. I found some Christmas stickers to decorate it and decided the belly of my clock would be a perfect home for a tiny Christmas tree.

Christmas time is a great time to spend with loved ones. I think of the families brought together to create these handy works of art in that small town in Sweden. It reminds me of the time spent with my grandfathers who restored clocks as a hobby.

So now you can sit back and celebrate this special holiday season by enjoying looking at your beloved doll's house while listening to the ticking of a festive miniature clock.

Season's greetings to you all, and may we all pass the time with more marvellous miniatures in the New Year!

I weathered it with sandpaper for an antique Christmas decoration look.





How historic rooms got new daring decorations

The incredible Thorne Rooms have been given Christmas additions in previous years that initially shocked purists. But the festive makeover proved a popular triumph

BY VIRGINIA CHASE SANDERSON

isitors to the exhibit don't expect to see the dark side of the story, so they are surprised when they come to E2, a room purposely left undecorated. Its placard begins, "Can you imagine Christmas being banned?" Many young visitors will learn, for the first time, that the Puritan dictator Oliver Cromwell outlawed Christmas in England for a long and troubled twelve years during the Protestant Reformation.

Lindsay Mican Morgan, my tour guide, elaborates: "The story goes that he would actually send people out on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, walking around making sure nobody was having any festivities, trying to smell out mincemeat pies or anything else that might be associated with Christmas. These people were referred to as the 'mince-sniffers!'''

Lindsay is curator of the Chicago Art Institute's Thorne Rooms gallery — 68 flawless miniature European and American interiors. Morgan's daring and inspired idea of decorating some of the rooms for Christmas has made the Institute's best-loved exhibit into an annual holiday attraction without rival. In a normal Christmas almost 1500 people would throng into the gallery each day, an overwhelming crowd. One morning last January, before the doors opened, Morgan took me on a little tour of her Christmas rooms.

The winter holiday touches are like pixie dust, tiny bits of magic settling on

the rooms, bringing them to new life. Small people have been busy. Someone has hung garlands on the stairs and a mistletoe ball over the door in the hall. Cookies cool on tables. Ice skates are left hanging momentarily on a newel post near the door. These touches, so evocative of life lived, are not arbitrary or cute, but stunningly accurate, the fruit of painstaking and lengthy research. They take us on a holiday tour through European and American history, from the 16th century through the 1930s.

The ice skates in the Pennsylvania Dutch kitchen are a good example of the care Morgan takes. After researching the type of skate she would need, she found the prototype for her replica with the help of a woman in upper Michigan who had the largest skate collection in the United States. She then made this pair of 18th century ice skates with their beautiful swan-head prows, under the tutelage of Chicago miniature artists Alison Ashby and Steve Jedd.

The other wonders of the Pennsylvania Dutch kitchen bring to light the culture of the early German immigrants. For them, instead of Santa Claus, the gift-bearer was the Christ child, riding a donkey laden with gifts. In front of the fireplace a little rye basket represents the manger. It contains a swaddling cloth, and nuts and cookies for the Christ child. Hay to feed his donkey is heaped at the bottom of the stairs.



On a table, cookies are being made in quantity. "People would make these big batches of cookies, large wash baskets full, ready to pass out to visiting guests," Morgan explains.

As I stop to marvel at each room, I realise that the rooms are real in a profound way. Each small replica is made of the very materials of our larger world. It's not a photograph; it's not virtual. It's the real thing, just smaller, which accounts for the dizzying and continuing magic of the rooms. Peer in with your eye at about 5 inches from the floor of the room (the height of a miniature person), and you - enter the

As I do now, stepping into the English Great Hall from the second half of the sixteenth century. The dog sleeping in front of the hearth steals my heart, but I soon see, on the banquet table, a wassail bowl of real beauty and complexity. Wassail was a hot mulled cider served in huge ornate bowls. Morgan commissioned William Robinson to create this one, a replica of a wassail bowl in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

"The spices go in the little top compartment of the bowl, and the whole thing comes apart," she explains. "Everything Bill makes has to function, and has to be made from the materials that would have been used, in this case

Above: A Devil's mask to scare away Mary and Joseph when they knock at the door.

THORNE ROOMS AT CHRISTMAS







a type of wood called lignum vitae, a tropical hardwood that's very oily, so it repels water." Robinson, one of today's most skilled artisans, has been a mentor to Morgan over the years. "He is a history buff, and in particular a tool history buff, so he actually used the type of 17th century lathe that was used to make the original!"

The banquet table is set with the dessert course, called the sugar

course. "It was quite the elaborate affair," Morgan tells me. "Only the upper echelon of guests would have been invited to the sugar course. Sugar was truly a luxury item, a thing to show off how wealthy you were. And amazingly expensive. It was literally kept under lock and key. There was a confectioner on staff, and usually the wife and confectioner had the keys, and that was it."

"There are funny stories about the

Top: English drawing room of the Victorian period.

Above left: In the Pennsylvania Dutch kitchen, cookies are being prepared. Food artist Cristina Minischetti made the cookies and almost all of the other Christmas foods on display.

Above: A pair of skates from the era and region and hay for the Christ child's donkey in the Pennsylvania Dutch kitchen.

consumption of sugary goods back in the sixteenth century," Morgan says. "People didn't have the best dental hygiene back then, and because of all the sugar the wealthy people were eating, their teeth were turning black, and people who weren't quite as wealthy, to mimic that, would use charcoal to blacken their teeth."

The beautiful New Orleans bedroom was an early triumph for Morgan. "I found a really wonderful diary by a young woman who describes herself getting dressed up in a ball gown that had ornaments hanging from it. That really inspired us. I worked with Maria José Santos from Spain. She does beautiful figures in period costumes, but since Mrs. Thorne was opposed to having figures in her rooms, we came up with the idea of doing a dress form,

THORNE ROOMS AT CHRISTMAS





Above left: A stunning ball gown in the Louisiana Bedroom, 1800-1850, suggests a young woman being fitted for her appearance at a Christmas ball. Festive gold ornaments hang from the dress.

Left: New Mexico Dining Room c. 1940, ready for the celebration of Las Posadas, a ritual re-enactment of Mary and Joseph's search for a lodging in Bethlehem.

Above: Nativity scene with starburst by Sutton Morgan.

Above right: Otto Natzler Menorah by Sutton Morgan.

as if a young woman were going to be fitted."

E14, an English drawing room of the Victorian period, contains another masterpiece, Morgan's Victorian Christmas tree. It reproduces one of the earliest Christmas tree in England, Oueen Victoria's own Christmas tree from 1840. When Victoria married the German Prince Albert, she introduced the German tradition of Christmas trees to her subjects, and Christmas trees soon became hugely popular in England.

The tree looks a little spindly for our taste. But Morgan held fast to what she knew about the Victorian era. The German tradition was to use small fir trees no taller than four feet, suitable for a tabletop, and to cut their branches into artificial tiers or layers. The tree ornaments, as well as the toys and dolls under the tree, are based on a famous engraving of the royal family around their tree, the very illustration that led to the craze for imitation.

Morgan talks about the many satisfactions of her seasonal decorating project. "I loved the idea of being able to show people that there are still miniature artists making things now of the quality Mrs. Thorne demanded." Morgan has commissioned work from many stellar miniature artists. She has perhaps worked most closely with Cristina Minischetti of Italy, who not only made all of the sugary foods for the Tudor wassail scene, but most of the foods for the other rooms, among them a marzipan hedgehog, a traditional Twelfth Night cake, tamales, a Mexican fruitcake, and sugar tortillas, called buñuelos. Not to mention the nuts I think I saw in a crystal bowl in the Victorian parlour. Do you know how small a walnut is in one-twelfth scale?

Another gifted miniaturist, the ceramic artist Sutton Morgan, created the wood and ceramic crèche for the Monterey, California room, copying the dramatic starburst altarpiece from the Carmel Mission in Monterey. For the Hanukkah room (A37, California Hallway circa 1940), she replicated a menorah by Otto Natzler, from an original in the New York Jewish Museum.

Morgan has had more to do behind the scenes than a visitor to the rooms might realise. Summer rooms had to be made into winter rooms, which

THORNE ROOMS AT CHRISTMAS



meant creating alternate backdrops depicting snowy scenes. The most spectacular backdrop was made for a Paris apartment from the 1930s, whose balcony overlooks the Eiffel Tower. For the cocktail party Morgan envisioned, she turned day into night, and lit up the Eiffel tower. Here again, nothing was arbitrary. The lights on the tower are replicated from the era: Morgan discovered that for almost a decade during the twenties the Citroën car company used the Eiffel Tower to promote its

Now, just minutes after the opening of the gallery, we can hardly hear or see each other, as we keep getting separated by clusters of excited new arrivals. It's hard to make our way through the gallery to our last stop, the New Mexico room.

brand, using 250,000 lights.

This room depicts the religious celebration of Las Posadas: people visit one house each night for nine nights, as Mary and Joseph looking for a room at the inn. The procession is refused lodging, though the hosts often provide refreshments. At each stop, passages of scripture are read and carols are sung. I ask about the devil's mask lying on a small chair. "Usually, whoever was turning away Mary and Joseph would wear a devil's costume or devil's mask to send them away."

Morgan did not initially intend to do



Above left: A panorama of Paris at night, as seen from the balcony of a 1930s apartment. At the time the Eiffel tower was actually lit up like this, with 250,000 lights. Above: This English drawing room displays the first Christmas tree in England, Queen Victoria's own tree, from 1840.

Below: This ornate wassail bowl, by miniature artist William Robinson, replicates a seventeenth-century piece from the Victoria & Albert Museum.

something so bold as to invade and alter Mrs. Thorne's precious rooms. She had thought originally of some kind of Christmas event in the gallery, outside the rooms. But the head of the Chicago Art Institute, whose wife was a great fan of the Thorne rooms, suggested, "Why don't you do things inside the rooms?''

Morgan was shocked. "I didn't know if I dared change anything! I didn't want to overreach or be presumptuous. Then I started thinking about all of the period rooms I had seen decorated for Christmas, at all the house museums I had



gone to. My colleagues affirmed that it was normal to do this to full size period rooms, as a way to see further into what living at that time was like.

"The kicker for me was when I talked to Mrs. Thorne's granddaughter. She sent me a snippet from Mrs. Thorne's diary, which talked about how much she loved Christmas—and then she told me that Mrs. Thorne had even talked about decorating the rooms for Christmas!"

When Lindsay Morgan inaugurated the Holiday Rooms exhibit, she stepped beyond fulfilling Mrs. Thorne's job requirements. In following her intuition, she has done something Mrs. Thorne would have loved. In entering the mind and heart of Mrs. Thorne, she has reached a realm of pure poetry.

• The Art Institute of Chicago is currently operating at 25 per cent capacity and you must pre-book a visit. At the time of going to press we were unable to confirm if the decoration of the Thorne Rooms was going ahead this year. We'd suggest planning a visit for 2021.

MSHOP AROUND



Joan's toy shop dream is made real at last

Some girls dream about diamonds, weddings and travel. For Joan it has always been collecting miniatures to create magical worlds you can get lost in like this treasured shop



BY JOAN MCKENZIE

here had always been a secret longing inside of my heart and mind to have a miniature toy shop with a workshop upstairs. I silently thought about it almost every day. I had nearly 50 years to think about making this into a reality. Never daring to speak aloud about this desire when my children were young as there were so many more important priorities. Still, one by one, treasure by treasure, I found unique and tiny things from travels, as there were very few doll's house shops when I was a young adult.

The internet and Etsy changed all of that. Suddenly open and available was the enormous world of miniaturists. All I needed was the right words put into Google. Upon finding my first artisan I shrieked with happiness as I continued to keep searching until I found everything needed in twelfth scale.

Two years ago, I realised that indeed I had amassed so many tiny toys that if I ever owned a toy shop it might actually overflow. Unless ...unless it was a bit larger than I originally had in mind. It's always a little dangerous monetarily when I start to plan something.

When it came time to give into my yearning, I needed to hire someone special to make the 'bones' of the structure. But first I had to know exactly what to ask for. Brick exterior, copper roof, rafters, a working fireplace, custom shelving, a front sales display, a counter that was electrified, lighting, hardwood floors and special windows.

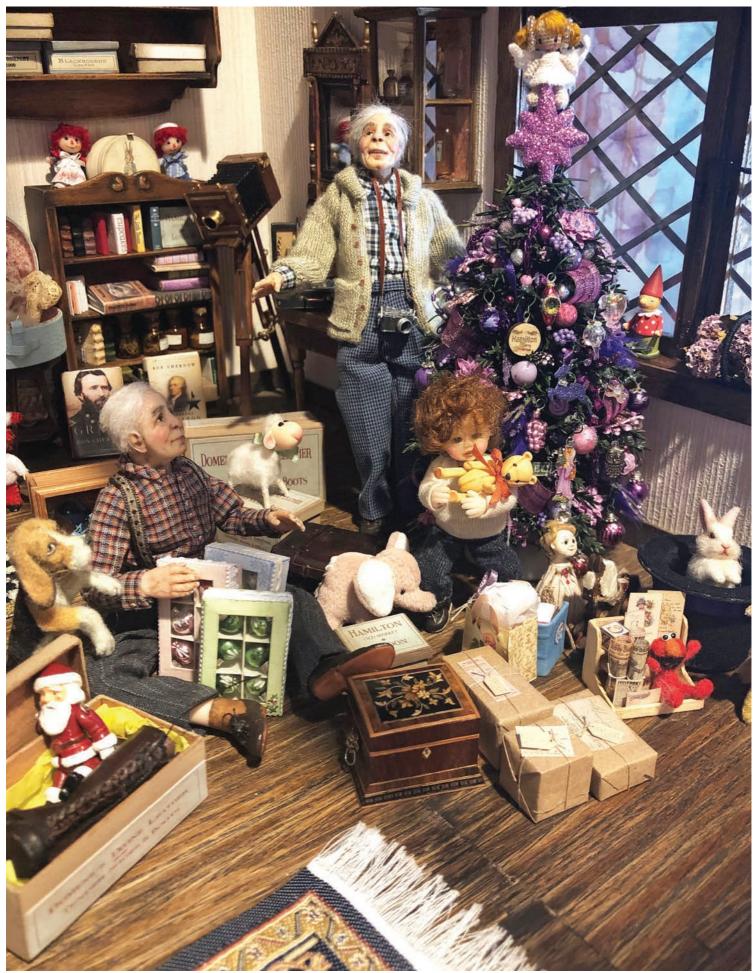
I found the perfect miniaturist in Cheryl Reeves. Cheryl exceeded my expectations and wishes, adding little touches I hadn't thought to ask for, she came in under proposed



Top left: Birdcage by Veronique Lux. Above left: Tool Chest from the 1980s filled to the brim with utensils needed for carving. Left: The festive fellows stop for a hot chocolate break.

Right: Inside the workshop the toy makers take time to celebrate with grandchildren. Tree by Mable Malley.

會SHOP AROUND



SHOP AROUND







Top: The fireplace mantel is decked out for Christmas with a working 'fire'. Left: Geppetto carving Pinocchio, a favourite at Christmas time.

Above: Shoemaker, Domenic, creates fine leather boots, shoes and skates.

會SHOP AROUND





Some of my miniatures were in hibernation for half a century.



budget and then drove 2000 miles from Nevada to Massachusetts to help with delivery and set up. I could never have dreamed of a better choice than Cheryl. It was so wonderful to meet her and her gentlemanly husband in

Above: Under the partner's desk, crafted by Lynn Jowers, a puppy chews on a new boot. Far left: A special couple from the movie UP sits high on the shelf.

Left: Tea cups, bunnies, hedgehogs and a Mr. Potato head make for a fun little shelf in the workshop.

person. We broke bread together and became fast forever friends.

I had been buying smaller items from Lynn Jowers and then she started working closely with Cheryl to make the furniture. Somewhere along the way during the construction I realised, to be complete, I needed a workshop above the store to be able to peek inside where the actual magic happens.

To say that I have been elated with the results is an understatement. Neither Cheryl nor Lynn skipped a beat with this request. It seemed all three of

會SHOP AROUND







含HOP AROUND

Right: Someone is helping to find just the right tool for helping the toy makers on Christmas Eve.

us were on the same wavelength and had entertained some thoughts about the possibility. What a beautiful experience it was to work with these two wonderful miniaturists. I am indebted for life as this was at the very top of my bucket list for so many decades.

Once the structure was in my home, Lynn shipped the interior furniture she had created. I had it overfilled with tiny toys within a day. It was so much fun to unwrap tiny boxes purchased so many years ago, remembering where I bought each item, clearly remembering the exact cost and the joy of initial discovery as well as this memorable joy of rediscovery.

Some of my miniatures were in hibernation for half a century. That seemed almost criminal! Some things I had completely forgotten about were already mine. There is a tiny Russian nesting doll that my daughter had gifted to me so many years ago, when she was a teenager. There are tiny tools I collected avidly whenever I saw one or two – or ten. Evidently, I always knew I needed a miniature workshop along with the Toy Shop, but never allowed myself to fully think this through.

This structure at completion is the gift that keeps on giving, as I find myself wandering into the room where this is displayed almost every evening. I have re-arranged things many times since the day it was considered complete and that's all part of the playtime that I never had as a child. This is therapy on a grand scale for me. For this feature's purpose I have it decorated for the holidays, with a beautiful purple Christmas tree and wreath made for me by Mable Malley from Canada.

I do hope you enjoy all of the photos shown that exhibit what the workshop now looks like and can understand how grateful I am to the women and artisans who collectively made this dream come true. I justify owning this splendid structure by whispering to myself a special mantra: "Miniatures. They're my ONE weakness".





Little houses are so big on the sparkle

Like many makers Elizabeth finds the midnight hours quite magical when it comes to being inspired, and that's when she creates most of her glittering mini houses

BY PAM NORTH

lizabeth Hjort has found her special niche - creating vintageinspired Putz houses, made from heavy chipboard, covered in German glass glitter, and embellished with her handmade miniatures and sisal bottlebrush trees.

As a child Elizabeth was attracted to the small paper houses found in the discount stores at Christmas. Very inexpensive and made mostly in Japan, they faded in popularity as years went by until a resurgence of a newer, larger version of the houses about 10 to 12 years ago.

She ordered one, but when she received it she found that it was very poorly made; parts of it were broken, and it was not as pretty as the photo. Disappointed, she sent it back, thinking she could do better herself, and so she did.

After successfully making one, she became obsessed researching and studying examples, and accomplishing her own through trial and error. "That's how I learn," she said. She also buys the bottlebrush trees to dye, but has made those from scratch as well.

Her Bakery Putz is a delightful creation, full of colour and goodies. "I love to do bakeries!" she exclaimed. "My grandfather started our town bakery over a century ago, and my mother was the decorator for many decades. It's still in the family, with my cousins' son, so bakeries are a love. My favourite miniatures to make are sweets."



The Bakery Putz is made of heavyweight chipboard, cardboard, paint, German glass glitter, and polymer clay for the miniatures. She makes her own patterns, hand-drafting and cutting each one. Most houses have about 30 pieces just for the bases and houses, and it takes about 8 to 20 hours for one house. The shops are even more intensive in effort and time because of all the items in the display

As a career she has been an accomplished professional seamstress, designing and making couture-quality bridal gowns and millinery, and even custom figure-skating competition dresses. Now semi-retired, she still has a small shop in which she does alterations. A manageable work routine al-

Above right: Elizabeth's favourite thing to make are bakeries like this one. Right: Even a vintage caravan is decorated beautifully for Christmas.





MEET THE MAKER













lows her time for drawing designs for her houses and miniatures while she works. "It's often difficult to combine

home life and making my houses and minis – it's easy to get pulled in all directions. That's why late nights are usu-



Above: Mini sweets are also something she loves to create.

ally my best creative times to design."

Elizabeth cites the source of her inspiration as mostly coming from fond memories she has of growing up, of being "the small child looking over the counter of the toy department in the local store.. I can still hear the creak

MEET THE MAKER

in the old wood floors as I walked on them, and being so excited to visually take in all the little toys and sparkly Christmas trims. The nostalgia that comes with that memory is still my inspiration. That was my eye-candy as a youth. All the seasons bring new designs and ideas for me to try. When customers tell me they feel like they want to walk right into one of my houses or shops, I feel truly appreciated. I think the miniatures bring much joy. I get lost in them myself working on designs. They just make you happy."

She has been drafting and patterning since she was a child. She learned to draft from her father and classes. "I can make almost anything. I sewed my first doll clothes pattern at age five. Whether it's carpentry, fabric, home improvements, tile, baking miniatures, or whatever, I'm a maker."

"I am so excited about the future of miniatures. There are such marvellous artists in this field. The imaginative items and venues they come up with are so amazing. I love incorporating my miniatures with the nostalgic quality of times past. I have so many ideas always spinning in my head trying to get out through my fingers. I wish I could make my fingers smaller sometimes, or just shrink myself so that I could walk inside my houses."

Since she was young, Elizabeth's favourite times to create are the wee hours between 10pm and 2am. She finds those hours magical, describing the feeling as "glittering at midnight", so she adopted that phrase as her business name. "All the cares of the day are past, and it's the time when I can focus. When I was young I used to stay up late on weekends and sew in those quiet hours when I could concentrate without interruption, until my mother would stand in my doorway telling me to go to bed.

"Almost the same thing is true now. I recently was happily working away one night late, and my oldest kitty started circling through my studio trying to get me to go to bed, just like my mum used to do. It has become a nightly thing now."





■The name for Putz houses evolved from the German word "putzen" which means to clean or to decorate. It was given to little houses that were placed around the nativity scene for Christmas decorations in the early 1900s. Designs and materials have varied over time, but you may also see them called glitter houses, cardboard houses or even paper houses.



Put together your festive hamper

Decorate a miniature basket and then fill it with Christmas goodies that you can easily create yourself

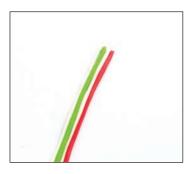
BY SADIE BROWN

elebrate the season of giving with this festive miniature Christmas basket.

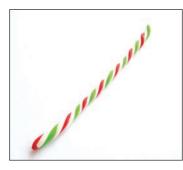
formation of white/green/ white/red.



Step 1. Mix Yellow Ochre and paint your twelfth scale basket. Once you're happy with the effect allow the paint to dry before coating with matte varnish to seal.



Step 2. Roll four tubes of polymer clay, two white, one Apple Green and one red, each one around 2mm in diameter. Stick the ropes together in a row using the



Step 3. Carefully twist the tubes of polymer clay together into a rope.



Step 4. Continue to roll and twist the clay until you have completely smooth rope measuring around 1 1/2mm in thickness. Cut into individual lengths and curl them over at one end to form the candy cane shape.



cookies a realistic appearance.



Step 5. Make 3 more ropes, this time using two lengths of clay for each, one white and one red. Cut the ropes into lengths long enough to create garlands to fit across the front and sides of the basket, creating tiny hooks at the ends.



Step 6. Mix white clay with a little Sunflower Yellow to make cream and roll out to around 1 1/2mm in thickness. Use a 1.3cm star shaped plunge cutter to press out several star shapes. Use an old, rough textured brush to give the



Step 7. Mix grated Golden Ochre, Dark Cadmium Orange and brown pastel to create a golden cookie shade and brush the star shapes before baking with the candy canes and the ropes and allow to cool.

Mix Sculpey Bake & Bond with white clay using an old butter knife and use the mixture to 'ice' one or more of the cookies. Return to the oven to bake and allow to cool before coating these, the candy canes and the ropes with matte varnish.

MINI MAKES

You will need

- Twelfth scale basket
- Twelfth scale biscuit tin/box
- Twelfth scale terracotta pot
- Acrylic paints Burnt Umber, Yellow Ochre, metallic silver, red Polymer clay - white, Sunflower Yellow, red, Apple Green
- Pastels Golden Ochre, brown, Dark Cadmium Orange
- Small brushes
- 1.3cm star shaped plunge cutter
- Roller
- CM ruler
- Scissors
- Craft knife
- Old butter knife
- Old wrapping paper
- Scenic flower tufts or twelfth scale flowers
- Tiny foliage and decorations from old Christmas baubles
- Small amount of tinsel
- Small piece of 2mm thick soft wood
- Sculpey Bake & Bond
- Matte varnish
- Glue stick
- All-purpose glue



Step 8. Very carefully cut a small piece of 2mm thick soft wood to fit several candy canes and paint with metallic silver paint. Allow to dry and coat with matte varnish before gluing a row of

candy canes along the front with all-purpose glue.



Step 9. Use all-purpose glue to stick the ropes into position along the front and sides of the basket, alongside one or two little decorations of a suitable size taken from an old Christmas bauble. I used a little green foliage and a frosted pine cone, but it could be anything, from a tiny Santa Claus to a snowball! However, If you don't have anything suitable then you could equally use a few of the tiny star cookies and/ or candy canes you have already made.



Step 10. Take a small length of Christmas foliage and trim the length of the green foliage down if necessary to ensure it's a suitable size for twelfth scale garland.

Decorate with a few tiny Christmas bits and pieces. I've used tiny red baubles from an old decoration, which was already on wire stalks to wrap around the garland. Glue the finished garland to the back of the basket lid.



Step 11. Take a twelfth scale terracotta plant pot and paint with acrylic paint in a Christmas red. Allow to dry and coat with matte varnish to seal.



Step 12. For a simple, quick and incredibly effective Christmas plant, fill your painted terracotta pot with clay or something solid, before gluing a mixture of white and red 'scenic tufts' on top.



Step 13. Cut oblongs of old Christmas wrapping paper or miniature wrapping paper you've specially designed using computer software (or see the Cutouts pages this issue) and roll into rolls of wrapping paper, sealing all the way along the edges using a glue stick.



Step 14. Using another piece of leftover Christmas wrapping paper, cut a square to size and glue on top of a twelfth scale biscuit tin or small box to give it a festive twist!



Step 15. After adding a base of tinsel to the inside of the basket, you're ready to fill it with all your festive goodies. I've also included a couple of pieces of festive crockery, so don't be afraid to raid existing pieces from your collection!

Display your new miniature basket and have a very merry Christmas!



Turn a doll into a jolly Santa with this suit

Just take a suitable doll, a handful of red fabric and some fur trim and you'll have a wonderful Santa everyone will love in no time

BY RANDALL CASTLE

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a jolly Santa, and here's how you can turn any sized doll into a festive figure. Randall is almost 7" tall so most of his clothes need to be custom-made. This technique will work for any size doll. Note that I am using a Jersey knit material for this only because if it is a stiff fabric, he wouldn't be able to move his delicate joints for photos. You choose what fabric is right for you.



Step 2. Hem the bottom with tacky glue. Lay the back fabric on the doll and make three snips where the neck hem will be.





Step 4. If your Santa is going to fool the little ones he will need a big belly. Lay a stretched out cotton ball over the stomach.

Santa's jacket



Step 1. First, cut a piece for the back. Leave room for a hem on the top and bottom of the jacket.



Step 3. Apply glue to the inside tabs and push them over with your finger so the two on the side are at an angle. Lay the doll on the back piece again so the hem folds are facing up.



Step 5. Lay the fabric over the belly. Keep allowance for a bottom hem. Drape over the doll and cut to the size of the back piece.

You will need

- Red fabric
- Fur trim
- Scissors
- Needle and thread
- Pins

- Pen
- Tacky glue
- Cotton balls
- Beads or small buttons
- Metallic silver card
- Faux leather fabric

TOPTIP

Wrap plastic cling wrap around hands to keep fingers clear of threads when : clothing your doll.

MINI MAKES



Step 6. Be sure the fabric pieces have the same texture on their fronts and glue a bottom hem.

Step 7. This next part can be altered to suit your skill set. Flip the back and front so they are inside out on the doll. Pin the front side to the back as shown. I am leaving a hem allowance for the front side pieces because the coat will have a hem where it opens in the centre.



Step 8. Put a little tick mark where the arm pit will be using a pen.

Step 9. Start hand sewing at that tick mark and work your way down. I did this with the doll in place. Sew both sides.





Step 10. Cut the middle of the front for the opening. Fold and glue the hems, keep in mind that one side folds over the other to close. I left the top part of both sides unglued for now.



Step 11. Slip the doll out and sew the shoulders together.

Step 12. Trim the excess fabric off the sides.



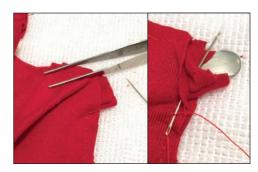


Step 13. Judge your doll's arm length with a hem and cut out, then sew.



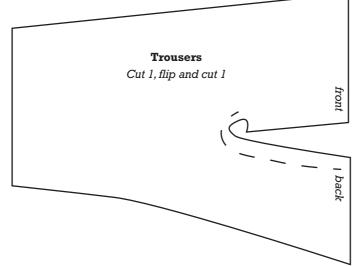
Step 14. Turn right side out with tweezers. Push the tweezers in, grab the cuff, pull out. Then push the tweezer handle all the way in to help turn out the sleeve cuff out.

Step 15. Test fit the sleeve on the doll so you know where to sew it in the jacket. Allow space for a fur cuff.

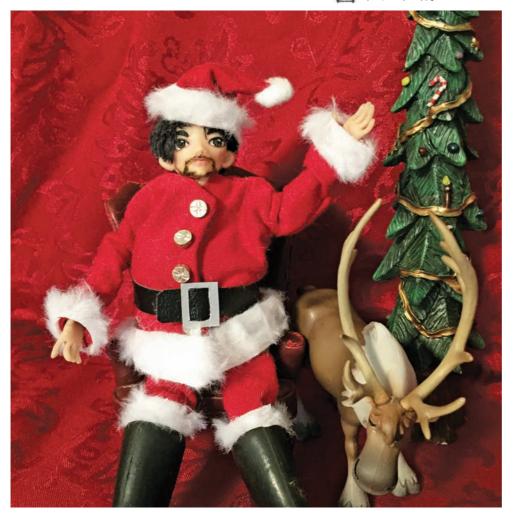


Step 16. Sew your sleeves in. I used my tweezer handle as a stopper so I couldn't accidentally sew all the way through.

Pattern



會MINI MAKES





Step 17. Now fold over the front top sides and glue.



Step 18. Sew on the faux fur trim and the buttons. I used beads for buttons.



Step 19. I ran glue along the back of my fur ribbon to stop it from fraying once I cut it. Once dry, I cut along the glue and sewed it on. If your materials are not synthetic you can glue it on.

Santa's hat

Step 20. Size your doll's head and cut fabric for the hat in a cone shape. Sew up the back and add a pom-pom or make a cotton ball.

Santa's trousers



Step 21. Cut out the trousers pattern. Cut one, flip the pattern and cut another. Place the side you want on the outside against each other and sew down the back to the crotch area.

Step 22. Pull the ankles together and sew up the leg. Then do the other.

Step 23. Turn right side out. Fold in one side of the front opening 1/8" and glue. This will fold over the front opening to close. Use Velcro to keep closed.

Santa's belt

Step 24. Cut a faux leather belt. Be sure to test fit the length around the doll with the stomach on the doll.



Step 25. Cut silver metallic card paper so it's taller than the belt and cut out two slits as shown.



Step 26. Slip the belt through the slits.

Step 27. I attached Velcro to it so I can take it off and on easily.

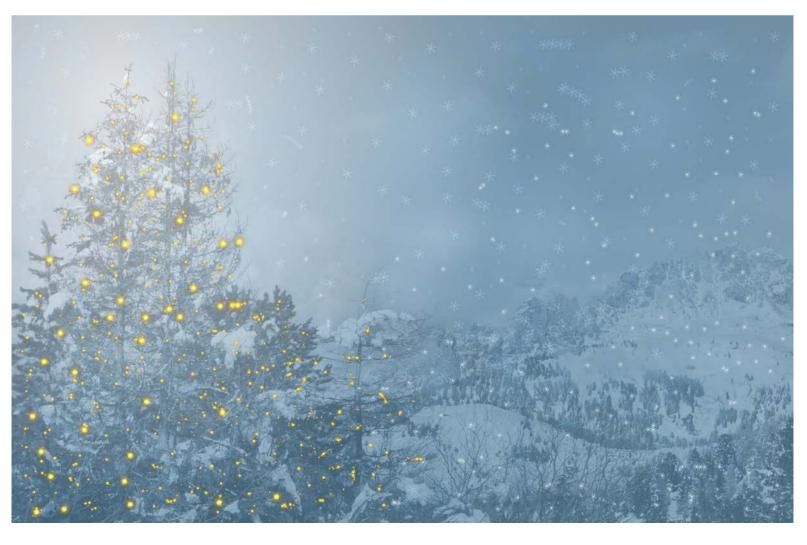
From our house to your house Happy Christmas

THE CUTOUTS PAGE

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From our house to your house Happy

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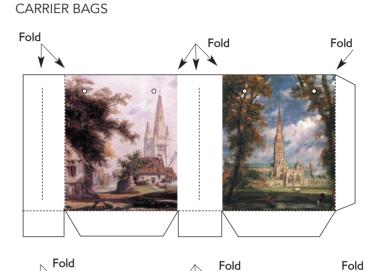




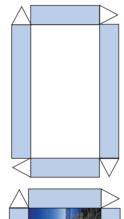


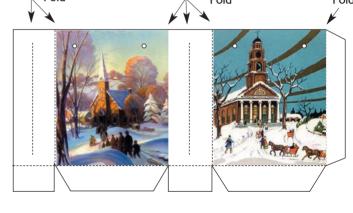






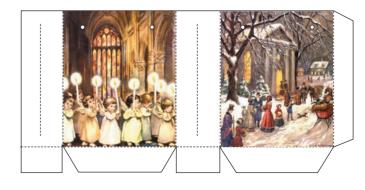




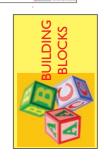






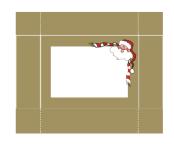


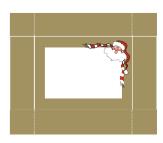








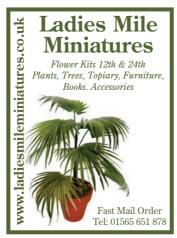




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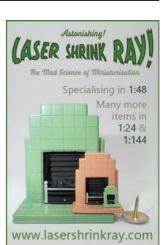












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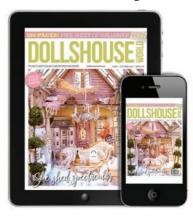
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WE CHAT WITH TENNY KELM OF KASTLEKELM MINIATURES

Hi Jenny, what are working on at the moment? I have been sculpting lots of characters and am enjoying making salty sea dogs right now.

Sounds fun? Yes, I like to sculpt characters like witches and wizards and older ladies and men. I especially like gardeners and some fun characters too.

Do you have time to collect as well as make? I have a collection of handmade items from artisans I see at shows. I collect an assortment of pieces, mainly toys and teddies, but also some pieces of pottery that have been hand turned. I also have some of my daughter's paintings that I love too. I have them all displayed in my cabinet of curios.

How enthusiastic is your husband about your hobby? I wouldn't use the word 'enthusiastic' but he is very much

involved in making items for our business. He has made many grandad's workshop items as well as fantasy and scientific instruments. They are very popular and he usually sells out when we're at a show. His main job is in the film industry and that makes it hard to create his own miniatures, but he does work on them between films. He has a major project on the go since lockdown but that can't be revealed just yet.

Well that sounds interesting. Let us know when all can be revealed. But tell us how did your mini madness start? I think I've always been attracted to tiny items from a young age and spotted a little tortoise in a shop about 25 years ago and

bought it. I didn't have a doll's house or anything like that. Then, at about the same time, I saw a beautiful book on creating miniature characters by Jamie Carrington and bought it, having never thought about creating anything before. I joined a small, local doll's house group (there's now only a couple of the group left who create) and started making with them. But what I made usually ended up being witch-themed! So suppose that's where the mini madness really started.

What were the first warning signs?

Warning signs? To me it seemed perfectly normal (whatever normal means).

What other hobbies have you tried?

Lots, but now I don't have as much time for them as I would want. We have recently both got bikes so will be attempting some cycling to keep fit soon.

What do you do when you're not in mini mode? I

read in the evening, and garden in between cooking miniatures in the oven. We visit National Trust houses and gardens when we have a morning or afternoon off. We live near so many of them so it's not too far to get to them from here in the Cotswolds.

Do you buy too much stuff. Your most outrageous example? There's never enough 'stuff'. We all buy loads of 'stuff' and none of it is outrageous or too much.

What do you love about our hobby? I love meeting and chatting to the customers and sellers. It's a wonderful miniature life that we all share.

"It's a wonderful miniature life that we all share."

 We want to feature more readers in Small Talk and we would love to hear about your life in minis and your passion for making or collecting, or both. Just send a quick email to richard@ashdown.co.uk to express an interest.

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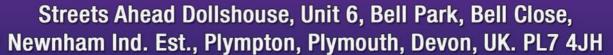
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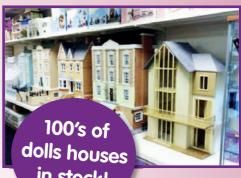






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